

FOOTBALL'S NEW FRENCH **PHILOSOPHE** Ooh aah, a touch of Cantona at Arsenal SPORT PAGE 22



Newspaper of the Year for photographs INDEP

Sunday Times is trying to smear me, says Prescott

Exclusive

By Anthony Bevins, Stave Boggan and Andrew Buncombe

JOHN PRESCOTT last night accused the Sunday Times of it o'planting a reporter in his conestituency Labour Party to act as backan agent provocateur, influculaencing allegations and local bour tittle-tattle" of sleaze and scan-The dal.

man A report yesterday from con government auditors cleared Ed him of any impropriety in the John Prescott: Received

wh sale of Hull Housing Action Trust houses to a company which employed the Deputy Prime Minister's son, Jonathan Prescott.

fill Mr Prescott launched his outspoken attack on Rupert last weekend that he had failed to declare a £27,750 donation from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, and a report headlined: "Prescott's son may cash in as council homes go cheap."

In an attack that might well displease No 10 - which has been cultivating Mr Murdoch and his empire - Mr Prescott accused the newspaper of running a pulitically-monvated campaign to smear him, fuelled by a man who had been "planted" in his Hull East constituency

He told The Independent that the undercover reporter was Simon Trump, who had switched membership of the Bristul West Labour Party to Hull East in August 1996. Marun Ivens, the paper's deputyeditor, last night confirmed that Mr Trump had been sent up to at the address. Hull "to get stories", having previously worked for the paper in

the West Country. The Sunday Times role, both in the incident for myself and East Hull." Mr Prescott said, "has been one that has had more political content and mo-



tip-off about infiltrators

tivation than that of journalists trying to find out what is wrong. It's a kind of, almost agent

provocateur role." The investigation into Mr months ago and was referred to with all the tittle-tattle. inside its Wapping offices as

Project X. Neighbours at the threestorey Victorian house that Trump described as "home" said vesterday that he was seldom seen, but when he was, he described himself as a "travel-

ling salesman". He occupied a ground-floor hedsit at 17 Westcott St, a stone's throw from the Hull East Lahour Party headquarters, where Mr Prescott holds his surgeries and which Trump in-

Yet there is no evidence that he intended to use it as a permanent base. Inquiries by The Independent have established that he was not on the electoral register and none of his credit cards were registered

Andrew Thomas, a 36-yearold student said: "We hardly ever saw him, but he wasn't here very nften. I spoke to him nace and he said he was a travelling salesman and simply used the

flat as a base. "But we did notice in the

mail lots of Labour Party literature for him. I remember in particular one envelope that quite clearly said: 'Labour Party membership'. He was a very clean-cut ehap and I did notice that he has a very new car."

Comparing what was happening now on the Sunday Times with what had happened more than 30 years ago, when he had been investigated by the same newspaper for his role in the controversial 1966 seamen's strike, Mr Prescott said: "It's a very shabby shadow of the those

"Now you get in there, tell them you're a mate, muck around in all the crap. It's not even an issue of politics. This is about internal tittle-tattle.

"The Sunday Times went up there with the object of showing corruption. They couldn't Murdoch's Sunday Times - the Prescott was launched by the show corruption, and so he paper that carried allegations newspaper more than 12 feeds the concept of corruption

He told The Independent that he had been tipped off last year, after the May election, that people had been put into Hull to find corruption. "I was given a name, this man Trump. I checked it out; he had been in Bristol, then he changed to Hull, and I asked around the councillors and I asked my agent and he said be had heard this guy had been accepted by the party and [was] going ont with the councillors for drinks

and things like that." Mr Prescott, Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. called the auditors in after allegations that 25 homes had been sold to Wyke Developments at a knockdown price of just over £5,000 each, when they were worth about £20,000.

The inquiry found that a "satisfactory price" was achieved for the taxpayer in the sale by the North Hull Housing Action Trust to Wyke Developments and that ministers were not involved in the trans-

Travolta shows his true Primary Colors



Film first: John Travolta and his wife Kelly with a fake cover of Time arriving at the première in Los Angeles of Primary Colors, in which he plays the President Photograph: AFP

By Tim Cornwell in Los Angeles

CANDIDATE John Travolta arrives in American theatres next week. The film version of Primary Colors, the novel that set Washington on fire with its thinly veiled portrayal of the 1992 Clinton campaign, premiered in Los Angeles on Thursday night.

The film's boosters say Travolta's portrayal of Jack Stantnn - read Bill Clinton - is uncanny, from the moist eyes and high-rising silver hair to the presidential hug and Arkansas drawl. Travolta is backed by Emma Thompson, aka Hillary, as the politician's wife, and British actor Adrian Lester as the story's narrator and con-

science, Henry Burton, close- at a time when Monica Lewinly compared to Clinton campaign glamour boy George

Stephanopoulos. For film buffs, there is the particular pleasure of seeing Billy Bob Thornton, fresh from his role as a half-crazed killer in Slingblade, playing the fictional version of Clinton's political are man, James Carville.

The huge publicity promises a major Hollywood debut for stage actor Lester, 27. Thompson, he told USA Today, "held my hand because she knew what it was like coming to Los Angeles. She made sure 1 didn't feel too lonely, and I will never forget that."

The timing could not have been better for its makers, or apparently worse for Bill Clinton.

sky has at last moved off the front pages. In the film Jack Stanton's "bimbo" arrives as hairdresser Cashmere McLeod, played by Gia Carides, for whom read nightcinh singer Gennifer Flowers.

But the film is not as sharp in its portrayal of Clinton as the book, whose anonymous author was finally revealed as Newsweek writer Joe Klein.

Travolta, 44, was paid a reported \$17m. But he is a selfproclaimed fan of the President who says he has taken "zero interest" in the Lewinsky affair. "I knew the film was not going to be a cheap shot," he said. There are other issues. such as ... the truth of politics, and rising above that truth."

Hacker stole secrets of stars from dustbins

A TRAINEE solicitor collected secret information on some of the top names in showbusiness -including Elton John and Lord their agent's computer and rum-

maging through his dustbins. Other stars whose personal details he obtained include Lloyd Cole, Lionel Ritchie, the dancer Michael Flatley and Barry Humphries.

Among items seen by The Independent are tour arrangements for Sir Elton, details of a private performance he gave for the Sultan of Brunei, the home telephone numbers and worldwide addresses for a host of stars and even an internal memo to Clifford and the Mirror. staff warning them to be careful of how they dispose of their rubbish. Some documents bore the words "To be shredded".

Benjamin Pell, 34, who is now being sued by Sir Elton and the agent, John Reid Enterprises, ters and the Branson exchanges says he amassed 75 bags of papers, including bank statements, confidential legal correspondence and tour arrangements befc sbeing stopped by a High Court injunction.

For six months after the offices of Mr Reid in the hope of discovering secrets about her friendship with Elton John, whose song "Candle In The Wind" was re-dedicated to her. business. Nicola Turnbull, his di-

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw how easy it was to get hold of this stuff," Mr Pell, who also works as a freelance music journalist, told The Independent. "I went through their rubbish and I got some

very clever computer nerds to nack into the system for me. Getting into the computer system was even easier than getting into the rubbish.

"I am a fan of Elton's and I Lloyd-Webber -- by hacking into wondered whether I could find anything out after Diana's death. I certainly don't usually go through people's rubbish or nack into their computers."

Through his dual snooping, Mr Pell found copies of Eiton John's bank statements and letters from his accountants, Price Waterhouse, expressing concern over his rates of expenditure on luxury items. These details were published in the Mirror newspaper, resulting in writs being issued against Mr Pell, the publicist Max

He also found copies of letters from Sir Elton and Richard Branson arguing over the inclusion of "Candle In the Wind" on a charity album. He insists that the Price Waterhouse letwere found in rubbish outside

the agent's offices. Mr Pell is now limited in what he can say about the affair. Lawyers for Mr Reid succeeded in having a strict Anton Piller order issued against him, aldeath of Diana, Princess of lowing them to freeze his assets Wales, Mr Pell kept an electronic and search at his address. They of the documents, which The Independent understands are still in existence, possibly abroad.

Mr Reid is in Australia on rector of business affairs, said the company was unable to comment because of the pending legal actions. It is understood. however, that the company will deny that confidential information was thrown out as nibbish.

_awrence case officer faces charge

By Matthew Brace

Police Complaints The Authority (PCA) has recommended that a senior officer involved in the uriginal inquiry into the murder of the black tecnager Stephen Lawrence, cilled five years ago, should face 4 charge of neglect of duty. Scotland Yard said last night.

Stephen, a bright, popular, 18-year-old student, was stabbed to death at a hus stop in Eltham, south-east London, by a gang of white youths in April 1993. Nobody has been convicted of the murder. The officer involved has not



been suspended or named, nnr the rank revealed, and Scotland Yard was last night considering if the individual would face an internal disciplinary board.

The board has a wide range of options to consider if the officer was disciplined, including dismissal from the force.

The PCA stated: "Authority member Ms Joe Dobry has recommended that one senior officer who is still serving with the Metropolitan Police service should face a charge of neglect of duty.

The PCA investigation started in spring last year following the inquest into Stephen's death that found he was unlawfully killed in a racially motivated attack by five white

The Lawrence family called for an investigation into the police handling of the case and a report on the investigation ter is under discussion. This is



by a gang of white youths

was published last December. A spokeswoman for the Metropolitan Police said last night: "We have received their recommendation and the matbeing considered by the Met- Lawrence. But five years on we ropolitan Police Service. If necessary, the authority has the power tn direct the Metropolitan Police Service to charge the

Lawrence, said the news was a small step in the right direction, but not enough. "One of the main things I have said all along is that when I feel vindicated is when somebody's doing time, and that's the only time I am going to feel vindicated in any way," he told the BBC's Six O'Clock News.

A member of the Stephen Lawrence campaign, Mrs Ros Howelis, added: "We have always known that the police failed. It's a pity that it's just one police officer and the others have retired, but we think it's

"I think this has come as quite a shock to Doreen family should know too."

will never feel good until the perpetrators of the crime are behind bars."

It is unusual that the Lawrence family has been in-Stephen's father, Neville formed of the PCA's recommendation before the Metropolitan Police have had a chance to consider it, but this move highlights the high profile that the case has taken. The Stephen Lawrence Campaign has petitioned constantly during the years since Stephen's death for justice, often in the face of seemingly impossible

A source at the PCA said: "This has been forced upon us by the demands of the inquiry. "We decided it was important that all officers should

know whether they faced disciplinary charges. We also felt that if the officers knew, the

Today's news

Call for flexibility in murder sentence The mandatory life sentence

for murder should be abolished and judges, not the Home Secretary, should decide the terms, the Lord Chief Justice said yesterday. Page 4

Britons killed on Greek island

A British couple have been stabbed to death in their retirement home on the Greek island of Cephalonia. Page 3

Dome gas angers **environmentalists**

Environmentalists vowed to resume their battle against the millennium dome after it became known that its air conditioning system would use a powerful "greenhouse Page 5

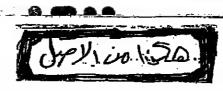
MOUTH WATERING OYSTERS. (BUT NOT FROM OUR FOOD HALL.) ROLEX



It's probably the largest, most tempting display of Rolex Oysters you'll ever see, all glittering beneath the erystal chandeliers in our Watch Room. And because we don't believe you'll ever see finer chronometers in your life, we've made sure it's not far from the champagne in the Wine Department. Just in case you should feel like celebrating the purchase of a lifetime.



INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 . CROSSWORDS, TIME OFF P12 AND P24 . TODAY'S TELEVISION, THE EYE .



Bingham in plea over murder sentences

By Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

MANDATORY life sentences for murder should he abolished and judges, not the Home Secretary, should decide the terms served by murderers, the Lord Chief Justice said

The current situation ignores "a cardinal principle of morality, justice and democratic government" - that the prison term to be served should be announced in open court, Lord Bingham told an audience of senior police officers.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, moved quickly, however, to quash any possibility of the Government taking up Lord Bingham's proposal. And victims' families angrily rejected the proposal as "ludicrous".

In his speech, Lord Bingham rejected the argument that murder was such a uniquely evil crime that only a life term would do, as "at best, a quarter truth".

Murders varied greatly and it was "unjustifiable" to treat them all the same, he said.

He cited as an example the case of paratrooper Lee Clegg. who was jailed for life for the murder of a joyrider in Belfast. Although Clegg has been granted a retrial, Lord Bingham said even if he was guilty as originally charged, he did not deserve the same sentence as a mass murderer like Fred West.

Lord Bingham said the real problem lay in the obligation to pass a life sentence on all murderers. And he added that the current rules ignored "a cardinal principle of morality, justice and democratic government" that the prison term to be served should be announced in

At present, all murderers are automatically jailed for life. should he left to the courts."

The judge in secret recommends a term of years to be served - the "tariff" - but this can be altered by the Lord Chief Justice and the Home Secretary. Once the tariff is served, the Home Secretary decides when the killer should be released.

That means the life sentence "is no more than a formula which gave no real clue to the offender, to the victim's family, to the media or to the public at large, what in practical terms of years to be served in prison the sentence meant", Lord Bingham said.

In his response, the Home Secretary said mandatory life sentences were necessary to protect the public and ensure the punishment imposed on criminals fitted their crime.

"Murder is very different from all other categories of offence. The public expect and require greater protection from murderers," Mr Straw said.

Lord Bingham was accused of being "completchy out of touch with reality" by Norman Black, of Support After Murder and Manslaughter, whose girlfriend was murdered four years ago. "It's an insult to the bereaved who are left behind," he said. "We don't want revenge but we do want retribution ..

"Proper sentencing won't bring anyone back but it will give us a sense of justice. To try and do away with the life sentence is simply degrading to us."

Lord Bingham's proposal was welcomed, however, by the civil rights group Liberty. "Mandatory life sentences prevent the court giving a sentence that is appropriate and just," said Liberty director John Wadham. "They allow politicians to interfere with scotencing and allow them to decide when another person should be released from prison - matters which



The delegation led by Sir William McPherson at the scene of Stephen Lawrence's murder yesterday

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

Lawrence inquiry chief visits site of killing

By Matthew Brace

THE MAN heading a new inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence paid an emotional visit to the site of the attack in

yesterday."
Sir William Macpherson of Clury, a retired High Court judge, said his visit was a bid to encourage witnesses to come forward, and was alse in ory of Stephen".

"It is right that this inquiry is into his death and it seemed to me right to come here and remind people of the terrible events of five years ago," Sir William said.

He spent several stimutes looking at a memorial stone in Stephen died, which was defaced last week.

he waited for a bus in April

Sir William has already apthe pavement at the spot where pealed for more witnesses to come forward and give evidence to the inquiry, which gets un-

der way on Monday at the Elephant and Castle, south Lon-

He admitted yesterday that no one had responded to his appeal but he said he still hoped traw last July, would help solve some of the questions surrounding the case.

"I hope it will lance the boil and help the Lawrences come to terms with the dreadful collapsed at the Old Bailey events of five years ago," he

"New prosecutions are unlikely, as everyone who knows about this case must realise, but hat the inquiry, announced . it's impossible to forecast what the Home Secretary Jack will come out of this inquiry."

Five men were arrested in connection with the murder but charges against two were ... at the vandalism that was perdropped in September 1995. The trial of the remaining three

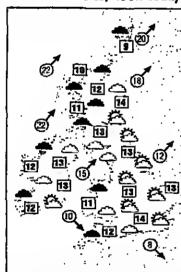
the following year.

An inquest last year decided that Stephen was unlawfully killed in an unprovoked racist attack by five white youths.

Sir William, who has visited the spot cince before, added that another reason for yesterday's visit was to "mark our disgust petrated", "It was an unspeak-

WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today



General summary and outlook: Scotland will be very mild but mainly cloudy and breezy with occasional drizzly rain, more especially over westfacing coasts and hills. Sheltered areas of eastern Scotland will be a little brighter with a few sunny intervals and the highest temperatures. Northern heland, northern England and north Wales will also be largely cloudy but mild with nothing worse than a few spots of drizzle.

Meanwhile, south Wales and the rest of England will be

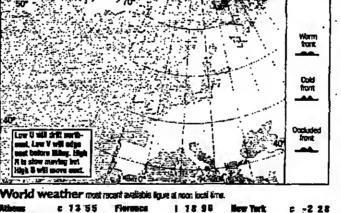
dry and mild with a mtx of cloud and a few sunny

Sunday will be mild again everywhere with the best of the sunny spells in the south. Northern Scotland will have some light rain, and this damp weather will extend across Northern Ireland and southern Scotland by evening. On Monday drizzly rain will edge south through England and Wales, but Scotland and Northern Ireland will turn brighter and colder. Tuesday will be cold with a brisk wind and a mix of sunshine and showers.

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Atlantic chart, noon today



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AA Roadwatch

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ing Common. Major roadworks until March 20. A5 Kilbum Park Road, Contrallow in both directions for gas repairs. Until May 2. AS200, York Way, Kings Cross, Lane reductions at Goods Way for long term work on Maiden Lane Bridge. Until Aug 1. Somerset, M5 J22-23. Major roadworks & contraflow. Until April 23.

Out and about with AA Rend-watch an 8336 401 for the latest local and rational lattic news. Source: The Automobile As-

A46 Rath-Cold Ashton, Major madworks con West Midlands, M5 at the M6 JB Riccinch West Yorkshire, M62 J28-29. Dowsb Leeds. Contrallow and restrictions. Until Dec

Greater Manchester, A666 between Farmworth & Kearstey, St Pater's Way. Roadworks with no access to St Pater's Way from the Kearstey Roundabout, Unit 20th May Lancashire, M6 between J32 Preston (M55) and J33 Lancaster (A6). Lane closure. 2 tenes

Lighting-up times

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Sun and moon

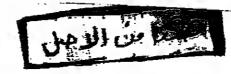
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Immortal – for the time being at least

"YELTSIN is like a cat, he has nine lives," a Russian equities trader commented yesterday when the markets dipped on the news that once again the 67-year-old Kremiin leader was ill. The stock exchange is sensitive to such mat-ters. National television was less excited, leading its news bulletins with the latest on the expulsion of Russian diplomats from Norway. The man in the street shrugged his shoulders,

sure that the President would soon be back. Mr Yeltsin, who had his finest hour atop a tank resisting a hardline coup attempt in 1991, thrives on situations where he has to fight. He is oot a man to let mere illness get

And we can only hope that the relative glasnost of post-Communist Russia is our guarantee that when we are told officially he has "acute laryngotracheitis", he really does have a sore throat or something similiar and not some life-threatening illness. Leonid Brezhnev, after all, was still described as baving a cold when he lay on his death bed.

Still, since he underwent a heart bypass operation in November 1996, the Russian President's health has been a cause for worry throughout the world. Under pressure from the press, Mr Yeltsin has had to learn to be more hooest about it.

He first disappeared into hospital without any explanation after Mikhail Gorbachev, then leader of the Soviet Union, sacked him from the ruling Communist Party Polithuro in 1987. In retrospect, it seems this shock may have marked the start of his heart problems. But Mr Gorbachev unwittingly helped his career by making him a martyr and, when he came out of hospital, he went on to become the most popular opposition politician in Russia. He was elected Russian President in June 1991 and took over from Mr Gorbachev as Kremlin leader when the Soviet Unioo say it, he is not like Brezhnev, just a corpse collapsed later that year.

The heavy-drinking Yeltsin tried to keep fit by playing tennis. But heart problems continued to dog him, bursting out into the open takes the ultimate decisions.

IN THE NEWS

BORIS YELTSIN

just after he had won a second term as Russian President in the summer of 1996. At first, as yesterday, aides said he had a sore throat; but his continued absence from public view so soon after he had won a stunning election victory against all the odds looked suspicious. Soon, they were forced to admit that the blood supply to his heart was deficient.

Mr Yelsin then came clean to the Russ-

ian people himself, saying the life of an invalid was not for him and he had decided to undergo a heart bypass, a relatively routine operation in the West, so that he could return to politics with renewed vigour.

The operation, carried out by a team of Russian doctors with the Texas heart specialist Michael De Bakey hovering in the background, was described in surprising detail to the press. Dr De Bakey declared Mr Yeltsin's operation a complete success, saying it would give him 10 more years of life if he cootrolled his drinking and resisted his favourite fatty foods, such as Russian sausage. But unfortunately, straight after the operation, the Kremlin leader caught a cold and fell ill with pneumonia in the freezing January of 1997. His return to politics was de-

layed until last spring.

Since then be has been active both on the international stage and at bome. He takes more holidays than a younger leader might do - his fishing and skiing-trips are televised to assure us of his continuing robustness. He is clearly ageing, and yet, though his enemies eing propped up for show. He is still meotally alert and, when the spadework has been done by his underlings, he is still the man who

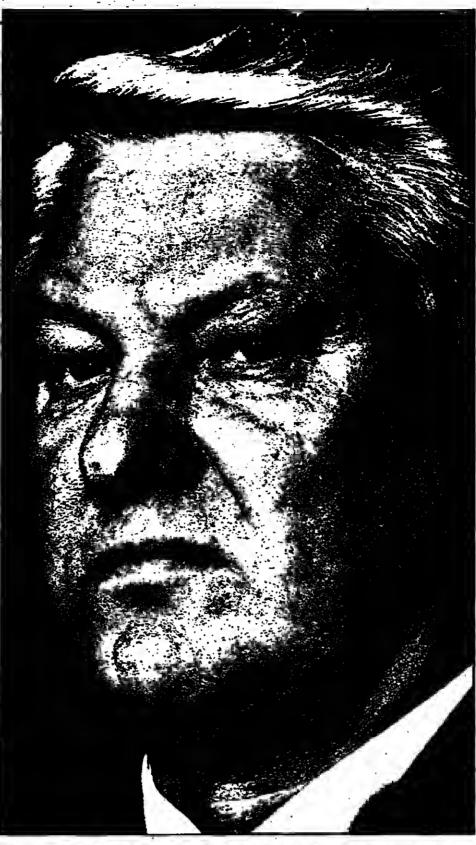
BORIS AND THE BOTTLE

Does Boris Yeltsin drink! Is the Pope a Catholic! Before he underwent heart surgery in November 1996, it would hardly have occurred to vodka-loving Russians to doubt that the throne than Mr Yeltsin's wife, their President drank. They would not have respected him if he had abstained. Does Bon's and looking after the grandchildren. Yeltsin drink now? There is no real evidence of any hard drinking nowadays:

tury may depend on the advice he re- the best guarantee of good leadons between ceives from his eldest daughter, Tatyana Morowand Klev was not to charge the pres-Dyachenko. He trusts her so much that dens of Russia and Ukraine.

last year he made her an official presidential aide, responsible for his image. Tatyana, 38, a former rocket scientist, apparently plays a stronger role behind Naina, who is said to like baking cakes

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL The great constitutional question of the ment is not who would replace \$1. The great constitutional question of the ment is not who would replace \$1. The great constitutional question of the ment of the



Survivor: 'Yeltsin is like a cat; he has nine lives' said one Russian

Britons stabbed to death on Greek isle

A BRITISH couple have been stabbed to death at their retirement home on the Greek island of Cephalonia. Roy Eccles, 55, and his wife,

Judith, 49, were found by Mrs Eccles' brother, who was visiting the island, in the early hours of Thursday, the Foreign Office said. They are believed to have been killed in their beds. Their car was found abandoned 25 miles away near the ferry port of Sami, where boats connect with Patras oo the mainland. Forty extra police officers were drafted in from the mainland yesterday to help with the inquiry, and a specialist team was due to examine the car.

The murders have sbocked the peaceful island made famous by Louis de Berniere's book, Captain Corelli's Mandolin. A local police official said: "This is an unprecedented crime in our area."

Mr Eccles, a former electrical engineer, and his wife, an accountant, had retired from Cambridgesbire to their newlybuilt house on the edge of the village of Kaminarata last October.

A police spokesman said they were not sure of the motive for the attack. The victims suffered multiple stab wounds and the house was ransacked, but there were several puzzling features.

"The state of the house means that burglary is possible, but we found a lot of jewellery and other expensive things left chain, has been in the bestseller behind," be said. "We are look- list for months. It charts the Italing at other possibilities. It could have been over an argument. But we tend to go for robbery it the moment."

er of a holiday apartment block visit the island are estimated to



Murdered in their beds: Roy



shocked everyone.

"Cephalonia is a peaceful place and I doo't remember there ever being a murder before," he said. "The worst thing that happens is in the summer when the island fills up with visitors and sometimes people get killed in road accidents."

Captain Corelli's Mandolin, the book which features the island, the largest in the Ionian ian occupation during the Secood World War and the idea that paradise can be violated by evil. As many as one in five of Nick Sklavounakis, the own- the thousands of Britons who in Argostoli, the biggest town on arrive with a copy of the novel.

Male primary teachers join the endangered species list

Education Editor

of killing

Male primary teachers are becoming an endangered species. Only oine per cent of sixth-form boys put teaching as their too career choice compared with 40 per cent of girls, according to a new survey published today.

Men account for only 17 per cent of primary school teachers and, if the decline continues at the present rate, the male primary teacher will have disappeared by the year 2010. Nigel de Gruchy, general

secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Womeo Teachers, blamed pay for the feminisation of the profession. "Teaching is OK for a second income in a family but as a first income which is what young men might more likely be looking for - it is extremely unattractive."

He gave the example of an unruly eight-year-old who was recently visited by a male educational psychologist. "He called her Miss. As far as this boy was concerned, maleness



compared with 90,000 men.

Yesterday's survey, carried

out by the Teacher Training

Agency and the National Union

of Teachers, comes at a time

when the proportion of male.

ings were worrying. "The poor-

er performance of boys

been linked with a lack of male

teachers is falling steadily.

and education were obviously now 96,000 female teachers motually exclusive." Figures published recently show that in 1996 only 8,262 men entered teacher training compared with 19,630 women.

Eighty eight per cent of primary classroom teachers are women and the proportion of female deputy heads and heads

Even in secondary schools, where men have traditionally outnumbered women, there are teaching by levels of pay. Both sexes found long holidays a very attractive part of the job and were most put off by the idea of unruly pupils. There is growing concern

about teacher recruitment. The Commons Select Committee on Education recently warned ministers that urgent action was needed. Applications for one-year postgraduate courses are down by 10 per cent. The drop for maths is 22 per cent and for physics 34 per cent.

role models in early education."

that twice as many girls as boys

said they would be attracted to

The survey of more than 1,000 16-19-year-olds showed

John Howson, an educational consultant and former adviser to the Teacher Training Agency, said: "Women are going into teaching because they think it involves a lifestyle which includes quality time for Doug McAvoy, the union's children. All this talk from the general secretary, said the findhours and teachers taking on literacy and oumeracy summer compared with girls has in part schools in the holidays is a high-

Milk chocolate wins a reprieve from Brussels

By Katherine Butler in Brussels

THERE is fresh news from the front in the Great Chocolate War - traditional British milk chocolate has been saved by the Brussels bureaucrats.

In the latest twist to a long-running saga, the European Commission has rejected attempts by chocolate purists on the Continent to force British people to buy only chocolate made from pure cocoa.

To the dismay of rival confectioners in Belgium and France, the Commission has chocolate. overruled members of the European Parnament, who in a shock vote last October raised the prospect of a ban on British people buying Milk Tray or Cadbury's Dairy Milk MEPs had deleted a key phrase from a proposed new EU chocolate law which stated: "The UK and Ireland may authorise the use in their territory of the name

describing their bars as milk chocolate, either on the home market or for export.

But the Commission has ignored this amendment in its latest version of the directive. Brussels has also thrown out an amendment insisting that there can be no new chocolate legislation until scientists devise a reliable method for monitoring the amount of vegetable fat in a bar of

The chocolate war is as old as Britain's membership of the European Union and the new chocolate directive is the Commission's attempt to end it. In 1973 the UK. and Ireland were granted exemptions from a ban on making chocolate from anything other than cocoa butter.

But while we were allowed to indulge

milk chocolate to designate the product". the national craving for sweet milky bars. This would have forced Cadbury's to made with up to 5 per cent vegetable fat, change the recipe if they wanted to go on regarded as inferior on the Continent, the EU banned the export of British chocolate to the rest of Europe. The new directive would open up the trade for the first time in almost 25 years, although it looks as if we may have a single currency before we have a true European chocolate union.

Poor cocoa-producing countries such as Ivory Coast are deeply upset by the latest Commission ruling. "They are not taking into account the interests of producing countries, although this directive will lead to a reduction in consumption of cocoa," said Silas Kamga, secretary general of the Cocoa Producers Association. And MEPs will get another attempt to stymic the Commission's proposal when the legislation comes back for a second reading in a few

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Outfoxed: Eleven-year-old Roseanne Mills, with Connor, her brother's toy fox. Mr Blair had said in reply to her letter that he would support a ban on hunting

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PM breaks hunt ban promise to girl aged II

By Paul Routledge Political Correspondent

11-year-old schoolgirl "very, Prime Minister these questions mons, in spite of promising to he is thinking about." Street.

supporting the Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill used the Prime Minister's promise to Leeds schoolgirl Roseanne Mills to underline their warning that the Government will oot be able to ignore their demands for action against for- volved." hunting.

through lack of time. A minis- er with a list of points to make ter told The Independent that the to callers from the media, in-Government will oow have to cluding her view that dragprovide time in the oext session of Parliament for a Bill to ban fox-hunting. "The Cabinet will have to act because there is so Animals, including the RSPCA much support for a ban among Labour MPs and in the party Prime Minister has made his pooutside."

The whips have warned ministers that there are ecough Labour MPs who support a ban on fox-hunting to defeat the Government, The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said the Government had 'no mandate' to ban fox-hunting, but the anti-huoting MPs said they would be prepared to tag a foxhunting ban onto the forth-

coming Criminal Justice Bill. Leeds, had received a written es to debate oo the Bill. promise by Mr Blair to vote for I will vote in favour of a ban."

turn up for a series of votes before the Bill was killed yester-Asked what Mr Blair was do- go away."

ing, a Number Teo spokesman said: "He is at Chequers. If you stopped and thought for a mo-TONY BLAIR yesterday left an ment about the workload of the very sad" by his failure to vote would not arise. We are a few for the bill to ban fox-hunting days from the Budget. It does before it was killed in the Com- not take too much to think what

do so in a letter from Downing .. But in their home in Leeds, Roseanne's mother, Pauline Animal rights campaigners said: "Oh dear - that is disappointing because he said to her he will vote for a ban in the House of Commons. That is a shame. She will be very very sad because she felt he was sympathetic and that he did realise there was a lot of cruelty in-

Roseanne had gone to her The Bill was "talked out" local school leaving her mothhunting was a viable alternative to fox-bunting. The Campaign for the Protection of Huoted said: "We are delighted that the sitioo clear in his letter. We now feel that the Government are going to have to respood to this

"Roseanne is disappointed, but it is oow time for the Government to respond,"

In the Chamber, the Bill died with a yell of defiance from the Labour MPs who had supported it through weeks of guerrilla warfare from the largely Tory opposents. As 2.30 pm arrived Roseanne, a member of the to stop debate, there were still RSPCA's junior club from 51 amendments and new claus-

Michael Foster, the Labour the Bill. He told her: "I think MP for Worcester, who sponfox- mting is the issue that sored the Bill, named next Fricauses the most public concern. day as the oext day for debate. I do think hunting is wroog and But it will go to the back of a 4 lengthy queue, were it can be The failure of Mr Blair to blocked with the word "ob-

Mr Foster described his Bill day left Downing Street on the as "still alive and kicking" and defensive. "He is not able to said: "I think hunting with dogs vote for it today because of his will be banned by the end of this programme," said a spokesman. Parliament. We are oot going to

Road-smash mother awarded £800,000 damages

A MOTHER-OF-TWO who has been left needing total care after a road accident was yesterday awarded £300,000 agreed damages. Hairdresser Vivieo Hacking received catastrophic head injuries when a car driven by her husband Robert crashed on the A1 near Brampton, Cambridgeshire, in May 1994.

Now in a state of "low awareness", she is paralysed apart from slight movement in some fingers, her counsel Simon Fox told Mr Justice Buckley at the High Court in London.

It is likely that Mrs Hacking, 52, will be cared for at a Sue Ryder home, in Ely, Cambridgeshire, for the rest of her life. The judge approved the award against the insurers of Mr Hacking, who admitted liability.

Final judgmeot was adjourned while lawyers investigate setting up a structured settlement which would provide Mrs Hacking with a tax-free, inflation-proof income for life.

E.coli family wins legal aid

THE FAMILY of a victim of the world's worst E. coli foodpoisoning outbreak has been granted legal aid to appear at an inquiry into the 20 deaths. Solicitor Paul Santoni said he had been told his application had been granted on hehalf of Mary Gardiner, 71, whose husband Alexander died. The fatal accident inquiry begins in Motherwell on 20 April.

Mr Gardiner, 69, attended a church lunch in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, in November 1996, where many elderly people were struck down by the E.coli 0157 bug. He died in Law Hospital on 27 November, 17 days after the outbreak began. The deaths cootinued notil June last year

John Barr, of Wishaw, whose hutcher shop was implicated in the outhreak, stood trial last year accused of culpable and reckless conduct over the supply of cooked meat, but the case collapsed with a ruling of oo case to answer. In January, Mr Barr's husiness partnership was fined £2,250 for food hygiene and safety breaches,

 $\bar{\tau}_{\mathcal{L}^{\bar{\tau}}}$

Road-sweep lorry death

THE DRIVER of a road-sweeping lorry involved in an accident which left a 10-year-old girl dead and her three sisters injured, was yesterday charged with causing death by dangerous driving. A spokesmao for West Midlaods Police said that the 51-year-old man, of Brewood io Staffordshire, had been granted bail to appear before Wolverhampton magistrates oo

Stephanie Popat and her sisters were on their way to get cash to huy Christmas presents oo Friday 19 December last year when the accident happeoed near their family home io Bushbury, Wolverhampton.

Stephanie suffered massive injuries and was procounced dead on arrival at hospital. Her sisters, Marie McCormack, 19, and Natalie Popai, 13, suffered head injuries, and threeyear-old Selina Shaw was treated for minor grazes and fa-

nr.

- - 10

mother

0.000 damages

wins legal aid

irry death

breaks Global tban warminise to gas tc warming cool Dome

By Nicholas Schoon **Environment Correspondent**

ENVIRONMENTALISTS vowed to resume their battle against the Millennium Dome yesterday, after it was announced that its huge air conditioning system would use an

The state-owned New Millennium Experience Company has selected a system using HFC which, molecule for molmore effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the

extremely powerful "green-

Earth's atmosphere.
That is why HFC is one of six gases which developed nations, including Britain, agreed to curb at the Kyoto global warming summit in Japan just three months ago.

Now, Greenpeace is asking why the British government is specifying the gas for one of the biggest air-conditioning contracts it will ever award. "This is a very bad decision and we'll do everything we can to stop it being implemented," said Peter Melchett. Greenpeace UK's executive director.

The Dome is expected to need year-round air conditioning as thousands of people flock through its vast enclosed space. When the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC) advertised for a contractor last summer, it specified Transport has two offices with that HFC should be used. Now a major US company, Carrier. has won the £1.5m contract which will use nearly seven tonnes of HFC.

This was regarded as much greener than the now banned HCFCs used in many conventional air-conditioning systems. CFCs and HCFCs are frown on because they are destroying the Earth's protective ozone layer, which keeps out harmfulultra-violet radiation.

Yet HFC could make a major contribution to an even bigger environmental problem. CFC-replacement continues to grow rapidly.

Yesterday the NMEC said only one per cent of the gas would be allowed to leak out in a year. Chief executive Jennifer Page said that being able to remove and sell the air conditioning system once the year-long millennium exhibition was over was a key consideration. Whoever takes over the gigantic structure may well not need such a large system.

The Dome organisers also wanted air conditioning which was tried and tested and could ecule, is more than 1,000 times be installed quickly, rather than opting for something less orthodox which set new standards in protecting the environment

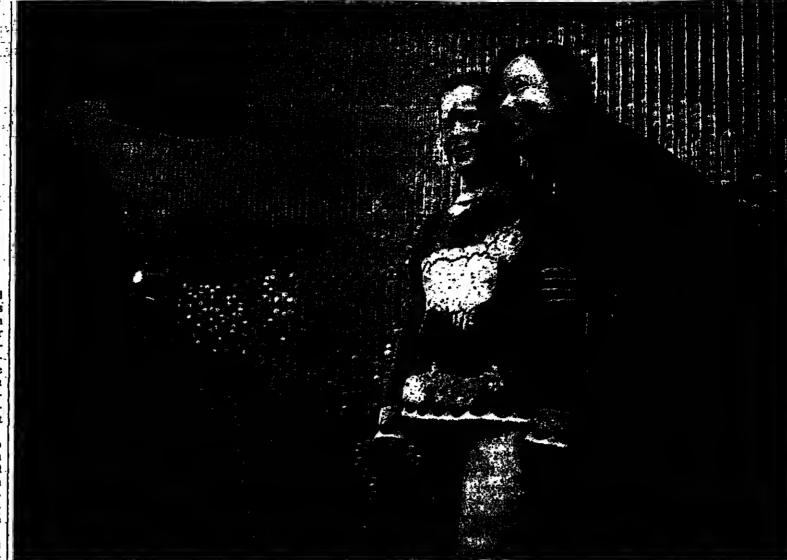
But the decision has come as a bitter disappointment to some UK air conditioning contractors and Greenpeace. It had hoped that John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment who played a leading role in brokering the Kyoto climate agreement - would intervene to stop HFCs being used.

In the end, he decided not to, confining himself to writing a letter to the minister in charge of the Dome, Peter Mandelson, which merely expressed disappointment at the choice of air conditioning system.

There are alternatives to HIFCs, CFCs and HCFCs, which have been used in large office blocks in Britain, London air conditioners which use hydrocarbons.

Nick Cox, sales director with air conditioning firm Earth Care, said: "Using HFCs is like switching from high tar to low tar cigarettes. The Dome [com-CFCs and soon-to-be-banned pany has to America for the quickest, easiest option when they should have been prong green, British teel ogy. It's a disappointment for UK industry and the environ-

Greenpeace had earlier threatened to disrupt the Dome's construction because it would have been roofed with global warming, if its use as a PVC plastic, but the Government changed its mind and chose Teffon instead.



Knit one, clone one, for woolly winner

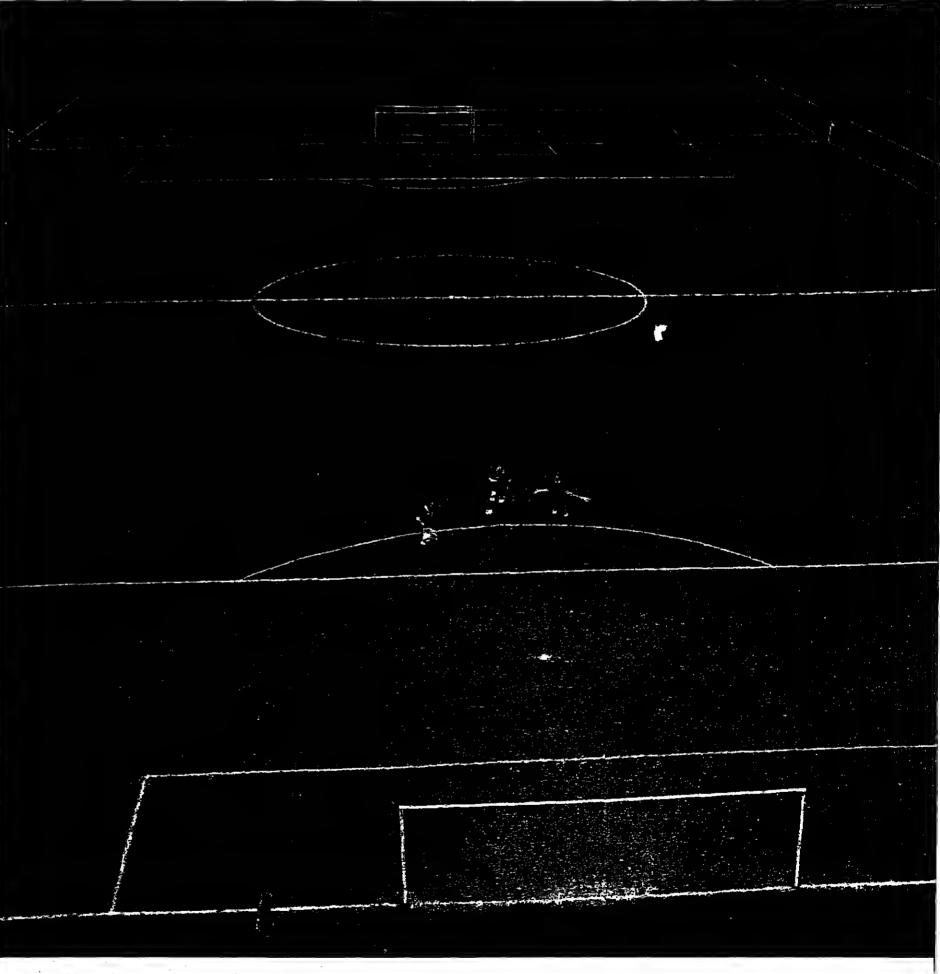
YOUNG designer Holly Wharton became a walking advert for National Science Week today when she donned a woolly jumper made from the fleece of Dolly, the cloned

Holly, 12, of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, won a national competition to design the sweater which was donated to the Science Museum in Loudon.

Actress Jenny Agutter, a carrier of the hereditary disease cystic fibrosis, said it was a great advert for the pioneering work of Dolly's creators and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust which helped organise the competition.

In future it may be possible to engineer cloned sheep which produce AAT, a protein used in the treatment of cystic fibrosis.

Holly's design featured two identical sheep happily grazing in a field and beat off patterns involving cable-knit in the form of DNA strands.



be taken with a pinch of salt

Death study to

By Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

Salt is bad for you - or it may be good for you, depending on the latest scientific paper you

The link between salt and health is thrown into confusion today with the publication of a study suggesting that those who eat least die soonest.

Previous research has suggested that high consumption of salt increases the risk of early death and current UK government advice is to cut consumption by 30 per cent.

For the new study, researchers at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York examined details of the diets of over 11,000 Americans collected between 1971 and

The participants had been asked to record all they are in a 24-hour period.

The researchers then examined death records for 1992 to see who had died in the intervening 20 years.

They found those with the highest salt intake - in the top quarier of the study group - had an 18 per cent lower death rate than those in the lowest

The results, published in The Luncar, are valuable, according to the researchers, because they link salt intake with eventual death rather than with blood pressure, as other studies have

done. They conclude that the results are not strong enough to justify advice to increase salt intake but they also "do not support current recommendations for routine reduction of sodium consumption."

UK scientists said the paper contained "misleading statements and methodological flaws" and said the practice of assessing salt intake on the basis of a "single dietary recall" was notoriously maccurate.

Consensus Action on Salt and Hypertension, a group of scientists concerned with salt and its effects on health and which is led by Professor Graham MacGregor of St George's Hospital Medical School, said that there was "overwhelming evidence" that a high salt intake was a major cause of high blood pressure.

"Blood pressure is the most important predisposing factor to strokes and heart attacks, the commonest cause of death in the Western world."

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Nutrition Policy, set up to advise the Government, recommended in its report on beart disease that average salt intake in the UK should be reduced from nine grams to six

grams a day. Most salt is hidden in processed food and the scientists say that more must be done to reduce the salt content and to label it clearly in these

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First past the post is dead, says Ashdown

By Anthony Bevins Political Editor

PADDY Ashdown yesterday predicted that a new voting system would be in place before the next election.

On the eve of his party's spring assembly in Southport. this weekend, the Liberal Democrat leader said: "Two years ago we were the third party of government at the local level in this country, now we're the second party."
But he then added in an in-

terview with BBC Radio 4's Today programme that although the electoral system remained the same, "we shall change it at national level in the next three or four years, which will make our chances of growth and progress even better".

Given the size of the Government's majority, it is likely that Mr Blair will go for his full, five-year term before he calls an election in 2002 - in which case Mr Ashdown appears to expect to have a new voting system in place for that poll.

But Labour's manifesto only promises a referendum - not enactment. It says: "We are committed to a referendum on the voting system for the House of Commons. An independent commission on voting systems will be appointed early to recommend a proportional alternative to the first-past-the-post

That commission has already been set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the former Labour Chancellor and ex-leader of the

Social Democratic Party, and is due to report later this year, but start spending some of the Govthere has been no public commitment to early legislation.

Ten years after the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party merged, the party today debates a new strategy document, No Glass Ceilines, in which it is argued that there need be no limit to the party's aspirations. Certainly, Mr Ashdown sees no reason the Liberal Democrats should not at some point form a govern-

Meanwhile, the policy paper says that "the strategy of constructive opposition" to Labour should be maintained.

In that vein, Malcolm Bruce, the party's Treasury spokesman. will tell the assembly this morning that Gordon Brown, Chan-

emment's £200bn "war-chest", helping to deliver Labour's pledges on health, education and crime.

The state of the s

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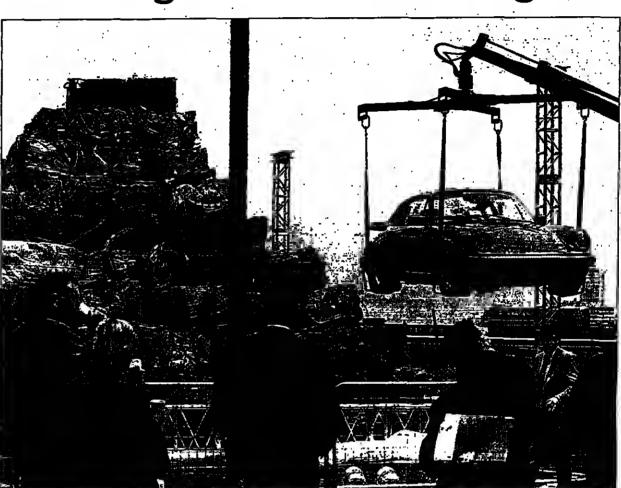
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But an article in the conference edition of the party magazine, The Reformer, says today that there is a danger: now that the Government is well on the way to delivering significant changes to the constitution, it could also satisfy demands for more investment in the public services - wiping out another Liberal Democrat demand.

In that case, the magazine says, the Liberal Democrats would need to carve out a distinctive policy stance on other issues, like education and environment policy, welfare reform, and Europe.

Crushing blow for tax dodgers



Flat fee: Baroness Hayman (below) witnessed what happens to vehicles that have no car tax Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

She launched a new Government crackdown on cheats tion if it's a good car or it's who are costing the Treasury £175 million a year - and showed what could happen if

people did not pay up. Road tax dodgers cost the public tens of millions of pounds every year. And all too often the vehicles are not insured or MoT tested either.

"I think a lot of people re-sent the fact that while 95 per cent pay there are 5 per cent

The Driving and Vehicle Li-

Minister Haydn Madoc explained: "First Baroness Hayman unveiled a a car without a disc is clamped pyramid of 500 crushed cars to- and if no one gets in touch afday as a warning to road tax ter 24 hours it's taken away. Then if it's not claimed after five weeks we either sell it at auc-

scrapped."

The DVLA's wheel-clamping scheme was launched only in London last August, but will go national this autumn. Mr Madoc presented the

Minister with a cheque for £4.4 million which has been raised by convincing dodgers in London to get their discs.

Baroness Hayman told a news conference in front of the 30ft mountain of metal at a police vehicle pound in Vauxhall, censing Agency's head officer south London: "More than the

cars we've crushed. I'm most

pleased with the money we've raised by convincing people to pay once we've caught them." And she added: "I'm told

forms in the two weeks after the scheme was launched there."

In the early phase of the plan more than 2,000 vehicles were wheel-clamped. And more than 40,000 evaders voluntarily re-licensed their vehicles.

The latest scheme costs £5 million and Mr Madoc said they hoped to multiply the £4.4 million clawed back so far by at least four or five times. Tax disc offenders have to pay £68 to get their vehicles de-clamped or at least £135 to get them out of the pound. They also face storage fees of £12 a day.

Cheats also face prosecution of up to £1,000 for a car or motorcycle and up to £25,000 for that Post Offices in London ran a heavy goods vehicle.

Ban on diabetic Sinn Fein can drivers to stay

THE Government yesterday dis-closed that it had checked and over a ban on diabetics driving lorries or buses, as it faced pleas to ease enforcement of the rules.

Junior transport minister Baroness Hayman, speaking amid calls for a review of European Union rules which ban all from insulin-dependent diabetics driving such vehicles, pledged to investigate the regime in other EU states after concern that they were not implementing the measure as zeal-

ously as in Britain. She told the House of Lords in a debate that the expert panel on diabetes was asked if those diabetics who had not suffered a hypoglycaemic attack a collapse - could be categorised as not a road risk. But the panel's advice was that under modern treatment methods the risk of hypoglycaemia "are

poglycaemia, which in turn led to a loss of consciousness "withdoubled checked medical advice out warning", and it was that which "poses the greatest risk on

> The minister said that faced with "clear and unequivocal" advice from the professionals, it was difficult to see how the Government could have rejected it.

She had no illusions about the strength of feeling among drivers who felt their own condition was under control and tinderstood their concerns.

Lady Hayman said that in the last three months there had been 40 accidents involving collapse at the wheel by insulin dependent diabetics. The risk of an insulin-dependent diahetic having a "hypo" attack was calculated at one in ten. The advisory panel will meet way last month.

at the end of April to consider representations from the British Diabetic Association and the not eliminated and may even be Commons all-party group on diincreased rather than reduced". abetes on introducing an indi-

stay - Mowlam

expel Sinn Fein from the North-IRA elements for another recent murder.

Sinn Feln is expected to be back in the Stormont talks on 23 March, following its suspension due to IRA involvement in two anurders.

Despite Unionist calls for action, Ms Mowlam said yester- volvement in the Conway day that she did not plan a murder, she added: "I have no further Sinn Fein exclusion de- conclusive evidence to suggest spite her security minister say- that I will take action. I am ining in a House of Commons dicating that I won't." written reply this week that he of Co Armagh man Kevin Con-idence I have suggests it holds."

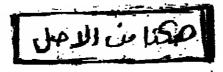
MO Mowlam, the Secretary of had happened before that. Mr State for Northern Ireland, is Conway was murdered on Febnot planning to take action to many 18. We took everything into account and Sinn Fein ern Ireland peace talks again de- were excluded. We now, after a spite the Government blaming period of exclusion, invited them back in."

She said she had acted on the evidence available and she had no more conclusive evidence.

Pressed on whether she would take fresh action against Sinn Fein if she received conclusive evidence of IRA in-

She said she had no conclubelieved "IRA elements" were sive evidence that the IRA involved in a third morder - that ceasefire has broken. "All the ev-

Her comments fuelled spec-During a visit to London- ulation that the IRA leadership derry she said she had no con- has lost control of its north Arclusive evidence Mr Conway's magh brigade - always one of morder was "IRA authorised". the most militant - despite the Ms Mowlam said: "We took insistence of the republican action against Sinn Fein on movement that it is totally be-



We use Shylock as a weapon against racism, say teachers



The Merchant of Venice': many teachers think children should not be exposed to Shakespeare's play. Right: Dustin Hoffman as Shylock

Education Correspondent

ENGLISH teachers leapt to the defence of the Bard yesterday despite a survey which found teachers worldwide shunning The Merchant of Venice as anti-Semitic. In the survey of mnre than 1,000 teachers in Britain, Germany, Australia and the United States, 5 per cent thought the work about Shylock, a moneylender, should not be taught, while 40 per cent deemed the play anti-Semitic.

The survey was commissioned by the Globe Theatre, the replica of the house that staged Shakespeare's works, which is producing the play as part of its 1998 season.

The play, written in 1596, has been controversial for generations. It has prompted walk-outs and protests at productions in Israel and was suggested as one reason why the Bard's face was left off euro banknotes. However, it is firmly established in schools. It is



even used as an introduction to Shakespeare for children as young as 10.

Anne Barnes, general sec-retary of the National Associatinn for the Teaching of English, said. The play can be read and studied on different levels. It is true that the whole business of Shylock is complex and the area of Elizabethan anti-Semitism is odd to 20thcentury readers. You have to be very confident about your ability to teach these issues of racism and prejudice, and you need to know your kids well."

Richard Wilcocks, of Bruntcliffe High School in Morley, near Leeds, teaches the play to 14-year-old GCSE pupils. He said: "It's a good opportunity to teach about anti-Semitism. They are very involved in the play and are learning a lot."

The Globe is running a project to work on the play with south-east London schools. Alastair Tallon, of the theatre's education unit, said: "If we do not perform and teach the play, how do we deal with other people's prejudices? Racism is very much on the agenda because the British National Party and the National Front are strong in these areas and we hope schools use this to confront that,"

St Saviour's and St Olave's School, a girl's school in Southwark, is participating in the project. The headteacher, Irene Bishop, said: "Young people are not stupid. They know there are racists around and just because there are racists in a play it does not mean we should not address

Chief Political Correspondent

are due to be released from custody without supervision over the next two years.

that action could be taken to protect children in certain areas such as schools and play-

Home Office sources last could be imposed on sex offenders by chief constables, if they presented a threat to chil-

As the Government faced mounting anger, a spokesman for Government recognises the public concern about protecting children from paedophiles ... The police and probation service have a role to play."

The police and the probation service expressed anxiety about the pending releases. But Downing Street said the police would be expected to use the powers in new legislation to tackle sex offenders, if they posed a threat to children. Extended supervision is part of the Crime and Disorder Bill, which should become law by the autumn.

There was confusion over the powers that will be available to the police after confirmation by Bill should be amended so "sex Alun Michael, a Home Office minister, that the Government was powerless to stop the sex offenders being allowed out of custody without supervision.

The law cannot turn the clock back and increase the punishment that was given at the time. I think the instincts of

The public outcry at the discussion of the discussion of

spective legislation in this respect. You cannot apply additional punishments to people retrospectively when they have served their sentence."

said dangerous sex offenders should never be allowed out of in some American states where paedophiles are assessed for risk at the end of their sentence and if they are still judged to be dantional prison term.

Paul Cavadino, principal officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said supervision of paedophiles after release was "crucial" to

offender orders" could include compulsory supervision, he said.

keep things in proportion."

Police get powers to check sex offenders POLICE will be able to use new powers to stop a threat to children by 150 sex offenders who people."

everybody is that should happen," Mr Michael said, But the Home Office source said: "It will be possible for a sex

offender order to apply to these It will allow offenders who demonstrate that they may be a danger to public to be returned

threat. "They could stop known sex offenders from standing outside school gates, or going into a play ground." But the spokesman added: night confirmed that new orders "It is impossible to have retro-

Chris Hook, whose daughthe Prime Minister said: "The ter Sophie was murdered by paedophile Howard Hughes, iail. He backed a system used gerous, they are given an addi-

> stop them reoffending. The Crime and Disorder

Tory MP Nicholas Winterton called for "urgent action" from the Hnme Secretary, Jack Straw. But the former Conservative prisons minister, Ann Widdecombe, said: "We should

DAILY POEM

"Lithium"

in can

10wlam

by Robin Robertson

After the arc of ECT and the blunt concussion of pills, they gave him lithium to cling to the psychiatrist's stone. A metal that floats on water, must be kept in kerosene. can be drawn into wire. (He who had jumped in the harbour, burnt his hair offbeen caught hanging from the light.) He'd heard it was once used to make hydrogen bombs, but now was a coolant for nuclear reactors, so he broke out of hospital barefoot and walked ten miles to meet me in the snow.

"Lithium" comes from Penguin Modern Poets 13 (Penguin, £7.99), which will be the last volume in this influential series. It contains a selection from the work of Michael Hofmann, Michael Longley and Robin Robertson, chosen by the poets

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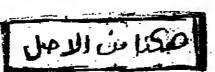
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Secrecy blamed for scale of BSE crisis

Winners and losers

By Charles Arthur Science Editor

A LEADING scientist will tell the BSE Inquiry next week that it might have been possible to prevent almost a quarter of the total cases of "mad cow disease" if the Government had not refused him access to its data.

lustead, the crisis caused by bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle cost the UK nearly £1bo in the year after March 1996, according to an independent report published yesterday. It found, though, that job losses and the impact on the economy were less severe than predicted, because of governmeot subsidies and compensation, and a change in

people's shopping habits. On Monday, the BSE In-

quiry panet will hear evidence from Professor Roy Anderson of Oxford University, who has submitted written testimony that he was repeatedly rebuffed wheo he formally approached. the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Maff) from 1989 to 1991, offering to make an independent analysis of the

Professor Anderson runs a world-class group of scientists specialising in analysis of infectious epidemics, and says he was "somewhat frustrated" by Maff's refusal to give him access to its BSE database.

If his techniques had been applied then they would have shown that the ministry's ban on feeding BSE-infected food to cows was failing, and allowed them to take appropriate action.

"The size of the epidemic would have been significantly smaller, by about a quarter of a million infected cattle," he says in his written submission to the in-

When he was finally given access to the database, in June 1996, he calculated that a total of 1 millioo cattle had been infected with the disease, of which

How the BSE crisis affected dif-

could switch to non-beef prod-

Renderers and abattoirs covered

by government compensation

ferent groups and areas:

only 160,000 cases were actually diagnosed. Scientist now believe that the

24 deaths from "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in Britain were caused by eating BSE-infected food. A spokesman for Maff said the ministry would not comment on Professor Anderson's statement at this time: "We are going to let

Dairy farms (in short term)

Specialist exporters of meat

LOSERS

Specialist hautiers:

the inquiry take its course. If have their chance to answer it."

Meanwhile, yesterday's reon the UK Economy, said the UK beef industry suffered only modest falls in output and jobs between 1996 and 1997.

livestock and genetic material

Specialist beef and mixed live

such as bull semen;

MIXED FORTUNES

Feedstuff suppliers;

Auction markets.

stock farmers.

The report, commissioned by the previous government, esti-

there's criticism, people will economy in the first 12 months after the onset of the BSE crisis was between £740m and port, Economic Impact of BSE £980m - substantially lower than earlier estimates, following

> British beef and beef products. Early predictions of 46,000 job losses were substantially reduced by support to the food

ACROSS THE UK

England: North, major loss;

South West, significant loss;

North West, small loss: East

West Midlands, significant loss;

Midlands, small loss; South East,

neutral; Yorkshire & Humber-

side, net gain; East Anglia, large

net gain. Scotland: major loss

sis broke in March 1996. But Stephen Nicol, a co-author of the report, warned: "The future impacts of the BSE a 36 per cent fall in demand for crisis, in job and income terms, on some sectors - particularly beef farmers, abattons and part of the marketing chain such as auction markets - are likely to

1,000 people lost their jobs m

the 12 months after the BSE cri-

up to the middle of 1997." At that time, wholesalers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers switched to other UK meat products as an alternative to beef, expanding outout and employment elsewhere

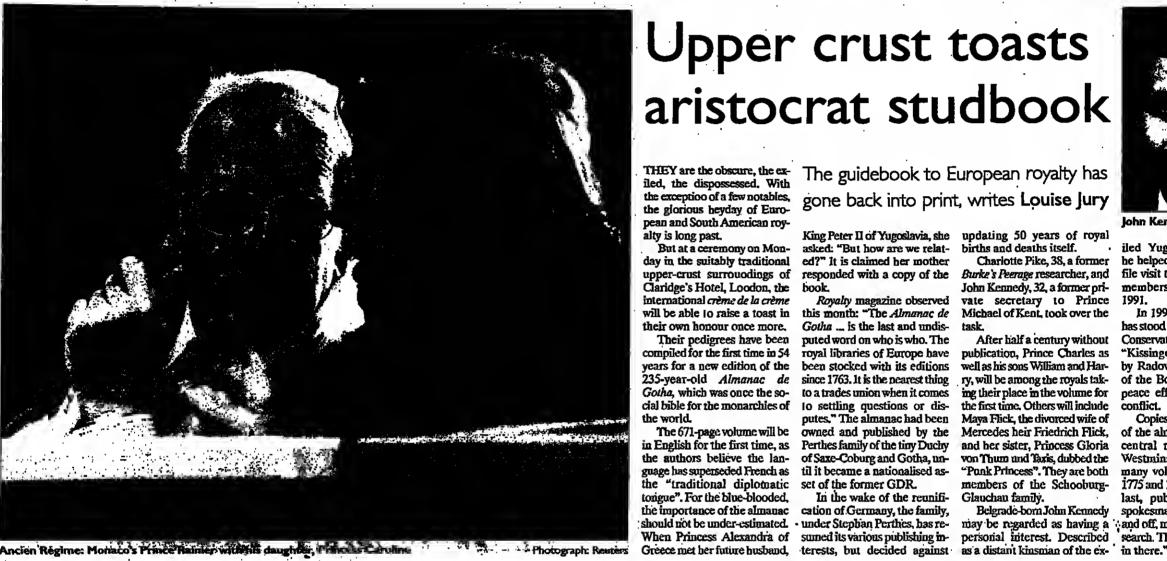
in the UK economy, they said. The authors estimated that

mated that the net loss to the industry. Instead, no more than half and two-thirds of the potential impact of the crisis on the economy. And the £1.5bn of subsidy and compensation paymeots to farmers, abanoirs and other food businesses did "largely compensate" for the

> Though abattoirs were hit hard - particularly by the loss of the export market - their profit margins actually rose, helped be significantly greater than by compensation payments and those impacts that had occurred a fall in cattle prices.

Meat processors received oo compensatioo and were forced to switch to imported beef and to change their recipes - raising costs and depressing sales and profits.

Regionally, the biggest losers were in Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland, and parts of the switch offset between a northern and south-west England.



Upper crust toasts aristocrat studbook

THEY are the obscure, the exiled, the dispossessed. With the exception of a few notables. the glorious heyday of European and South American royalty is long past.

But at a ceremony on Monday in the suitably traditional upper-crust surrouodings of Claridge's Hotel, Loodon, the international crème de la crème will be able to raise a toast in their own honour once more.

Their pedigrees have been compiled for the first time in 54 years for a new edition of the 235-vear-old Almanac de Gotha, which was once the social bible for the monarchies of

the "traditional diplomatic set of the former GDR. tongue". For the blue-blooded,

The guidebook to European royalty has gone back into print, writes Louise Jury

King Peter II of Yugoslavia, she asked: "But how are we related?" It is claimed her mother responded with a copy of the

Royalty magazine observed Gotha ... is the last and undisputed word on who is who. The royal libraries of Europe have been stocked with its editions since 1763. It is the nearest thing to a trades union when it comes to settling questions or disputes." The almanac had been The 671-page volume will be owned and published by the in English for the first time, as Perthes family of the timy Duchy the authors believe the lan- of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, unguage has superseded French as til it became a nationalised as-

In the wake of the reunifithe importance of the almanac cation of Germany, the family, should not be under-estimated. · under Stephan Perthes, has re-When Princess Alexandra of sumed its various publishing in-

updating 50 years of roval births and deaths itself.

Charlotte Pike, 38, a former Burke's Peerage researcher, and John Kennedy, 32, a former private secretary to Prince 1991. this month: "The Almanac de Michael of Kent, took over the

> publication, Prince Charles as well as his sons William and Harry, will be among the royals taking their place in the volume for the first time. Others will include Maya Flick, the divorced wife of Mercedes heir Friedrich Flick, and her sister, Princess Gloria von Thum and Taxis, dubbed the "Punk Princess". They are both members of the Schooburg-Glauchau family.

personal interest. Described



ohn Kennedy: Author

iled Yugoslav royal family. he helped arrange a high-profile visit to Belgrade by exiled members of the family io

In 1992, Mr Kennedy, who has stood for Parliament for the After half a century without Conservatives, was hailed as the "Kissinger of Yugoslavia" by Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, for his peace efforts in the Bosnian Copies of the earlier editions

of the almanac still exist. The central reference library in Westminster, London, has many volumes from between 1775 and 1941, although not the last, published in 1944. A Belgrade-born John Kennedy spokesman said: "It is used, on may be regarded as having a and off, mainly for historical research. There's fascinating stuff

Boy in train stabbing sent to Broadmoor

A TEENAGER was scot to Broadmoor high security hospital for mental health assessment vesterday after savagely knifing a young woman in the head while they were oo a train. Robert Buckland, 18, of oo fixed address, was convicted last January of the attempted murder of Alisoo Kennedy, 28. Ms Kennedy, a charity worker from Northern Ireland, was travelling in a deserted carriage to see her sister in Sorrey in March last year when Buckland attacked her from behind, embedding a Bowie-style hunting knife deep

into her skull. Judge Gcoffrey Grigsoo said at the Old Bailey in London yeslerday today that doctors were satisfied Buckland was suffering from mental iliness and the condition was susceptible to treatment. He would therefore make an interim order that the 18-yearold should be examined at Broadmoor for a minimum of 12 weeks, before being sentenced. But he added: "Even with a de-

cial at the centre of this week's

industrial tribunal abortion row,

apologised yesterday for his

Nick Marriner's apology fol-

lowed a tribunal ruling that

former Lord's receptionist

had a brief affair, was the vic-

Harrild claimed Mr Marriner

a development executive for the

bullied her into having an abor-

Theresa Harrild, with whom he not the ECB.

part in the controversy.

I'S BIGGEST AL STORES

fendant as young as you, given the horrific nature of the crime, my prime duty is to protect the

Buckland had fantasized about knifing a woman in the head while still at school the court had been told. When he spotted Ms Kennedy sitting alone in a carriage, he had found his real-life victim. She is still suffering physical and psychological effects from the attack. Judge Grigson told Buckland:

"You should understand whatever conclusion the doctors come to, it is for the court to decide at the end of the day, whether such an order is a suitable means of dealing with you."

He had heard from Dr David Mawson, consultant psychiatrist at Broadmoor, that there was "much to be learned about the defendant - many important background details need to be researched ... We do not know yet the purpose, the motive behind the attack and the nature of the risk he poses to others."

Board. In a brief statement he

said: "I am deeply sorry for

the part that I played in this un-

fortucate episode. I would like

to make it absolutely clear

that it was me that paid for Theresa Harrild's abortion and

thoroughly enjoy my job assist-

"I have worked with cricket

Cricket official in abortion row apology



Alison Kennedy and her attacker, Robery Buckland

Ms Kennedy. Wheo she turned and rose from her seat, holding the knife in her head, he ran away scared and tried to jump from the train, the court had been told during his trial. Ms Kennedy was left to stagger five-inch blade still in her skull. Although she will never fully recover, Ms Kennedy now hopes after trouble with his stepshe can get on with her life. Immediately after Buckland's tri- he was fed up with sleeping al, she said she felt "a great sense of relief at the result and a great sense of satisfaction to said she thought she was going to die in the attack. She had worked in London as an but denied attempted murder.

Buckland had intended to kill arts festival co-ordinator after obtaining a degree in arts and design and completing a postreturned to work for the Multiple Scierosis Society in Northern Ireland as an education officer last year and was described as "a along the train for help with the dedicated and forward plan-

ning young person". Buckland had teft bome at 16 mother but by March last year rough. He was on his way to Guildford to seek a bed for the night when he spotted Ms be here to see it for myself". She Kennedy. He had admitted wounding her with intent to cause grievous bodily harm,



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tion, complaining that he was behind me." too young to be a father. The tribunal was told that Mr Marriner, 25, returned to Mr Marriner refused to discuss work yesterday at Lord's Crickthe pregnancy with his formerct Ground, where he has been girlfriend and asked Sarah employed for over two years as

THE ENGLAND cricket offi- England and Wales Cricket

tim of sex discrimination. Ms for two-and-a-half years and I



ing with the development of the game. I now want to pot all this Theresa Harrild: Pressured

with the ECB, to persuade her to have a termination. Ms Har-rild's personal position and said rild says she was handed £400 Bladon, marketing secretary in a brown envelope and told to

abort the child - which she wanted to keep. On Wednesday, Ms Harrild, 32, won a claim for sexual discriminatioo after a panel at

the central Londoo tribunal accepted that she had been pressured into having an abortion and was unlawfully dismissed. The England and Wales

Cricket Board could now be ordered to pay her £10,000 compensatioo. Tim Lamb, the board's chief executive, has maintained that the board acted sympathetically to Ms Harmany of the allegations made against it had been "hurtful".

Cardiff takes prize in tale of two cities

THE LONG wait to discover the site of the National Assembly for Wales ended yesterday with victory for Cardiff, and disappointment for the for it to be sited in the Welsh other contender, Swansea.

The precise location of the design competition between Cardiff Bay waterfront and

Central railway station.

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, said battle for the assembly had been "a tale of two cities", but the case capital was just too compelling.
"In making this decision, I

building will be decided by a am mindful that Wales has invested 40 years in promoting two sites in the city, on the Cardiff as our capital city. We are a small country and must

"Cardiff is established now oot only as the capital of Wales, but as a leading administrative and financial centre which this year will host the European summit and, in 1999,

the Rugby World Cup." Civic leaders in Swansea bad complained that Cardiff seemed always to get preferential treatment, and making

Bute Square, near Cardiff build upon our achievement to their city the home of the as- cost is going to be when every- supported by a petition signed fused the Government's offer millennium. The new landsembly could have rectified this thing is built.

> Mike Hedges, leader of the Swansea council, insisted the choice of Cardiff would cost the taxpayer more. The Swansea Guildhall had been offered for £3m, he said. "The Cardiff option will have to be done within £ 17m, that's the government limit, but we will

"It's great disappointment that we lost and I am sure that Russell Goodway, the leader of Cardiff council, will have a big smile on his face ... We have proved at least that Swansea is deserving of more investment. it would be nice to be getting the £43m year by year that Cardiff Bay is getting".

The Swansea bid had been

by 120,000 people including of £3.5m and demanded Welsh celebrities like Sir Harry Secombe, the actress Catherine Zeta Jones, and West

Ham footballer John Hartson. The Welsh Office had been oegotiating with Cardiff council over the possible purchase of the elegant Edwardian City Hall for the assembly.

Talks broke down, however, when Labour councillors re£14.5m to take into account the cost of transferring council staff to other offices in the city. Announcing the competi-

tion, Mr Davies said it was essential that Wales looked forwards, not backwards. "I want this new building to

be a symbol of our new democ-

racy as we go forward with

confidence into the next

nation of the people of Wales." The assembly headqoar-

ters is scheduled to be finished by May 2000, and, Mr Davies insisted, the £ 17m ceiling will be strictly adhered to. Io the meantime, the first meeting of the 60-member assembly will take place in the University of Wales Court Building following elections next May.

Aerodynamic handbag launches Chanel into next millennium



in Paris

IT WAS NOT so much of a fashion show yesterday at Chanel in Paris, but a bag show. The sloppy tweed suits and cloche hats made some of the models look like bag ladies; but the big talking point of the show was the New Chanel Bag.

It is not quilted, and it does not have a gold chain. Instead, it is a hard brute of an object that resembles an aeroplane headrest. According to Karl Lagerfeld, the bag is aerodynamic and designed to take the house into the oext millennium. Its name? The 2005. It looks so odd that it might take customers longer as a pillow on an aeroplane". than that to get used to it: "It's totally new age," he said. "I have oever seen anything like it."

The inspiration for the bag was the female torso, turned upside down, although for the pear-shaped Briton, it looks like the area between waist and bottom. The right way up, it has two pump up sales of the Kelly bag, perbag will certainly give you soon.



Yesterday in Paris: Above left, Chanel's 2005 superbag on the catwalk. Above, Vivienne Westwood with models at the end of her '98/'99 show Photographs: Ben Elwes/Jack Dabaghian

breasts and a small waist. Like some sort of Nasa spacecraft, it has been cloaked in strict secrecy for the past year. It is supposed to be "body friendly", featherlight and made to lug any part of the body. According to the designer himself, "you could use it

The battle for the lucrative bag market is fierce now that Louis Vuitton has a slick new designer providing a collection of pearlised blue and peach handbags and wrist bags, and Hermes has the avant garde, hipper-thauhip designer, Martin Margiela, to

panies, Celine and Loewe, join the fray this weekend with brand new American designers to give their bag sales a boost. Michael Kors shows his collection for Celine today, and Narciso Rodriguez presents the first clothing collection for Loewe on Sunday.

The handbag has become more of a status symbol than it ever was in the Eighties; there are women who will join waiting lists for the sake of a £5,500 crocodile handbag by Dior.

The 2005 will take some getting used to. But the su- available at a market stall near

Two other leatherware com- Chanel's sales a new lease of life, while the clothes for autumn/winter '98/'99 look a tad dowdy. There is a shop in Paris called Didier Ludot that specia. ses in vintage Chanel, and this collection would not have looked out of place there. The clocke hats gave the tweedy suits and oversized iridescent pearls worn around the oeck a tired and dated look.

Meanwhile, the people who specialise in counterfeit goods will be running up their own versions of the 2005 to be



Colour match: A model wearing Kenzo's red ensemble with embroidered coat and top in his 1998/99 autumn/winter show in Paris yesterday

Publicity is off the menu for Hirst

By Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

DAMIEN HIRST, the artist turned restaurateur, has been denied what promised to be a publicity coup for his fashion-able eaterie in Notting Hill, west London.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has dropped its threat to prosecute the restaurant. Pharmacy, which masquerades as a chemists shop. The society said the restaurant had "knowingly flouted the law" by adopting the name Pharmacy which is a criminal offence under the Medicines Act 1968.

It had reluctantly decided to defer prosecution because "no penalty is available at present that is likely to deter the owners from using the name." The maximum fine under the act is £1,000 - a fraction of what the publicity caused by such a case would have been worth.

Charles Pullan, manager of the £1.5 million restaurant whose shelves of medicines have been confusing shoppers trying to get their prescriptions filled, said be was disappointed. We are very upset. It was quite an exciting, fun thing going on in the background. We never thought the the Royal Pharmacentical Society would get very far 3

John Perguson, secretary of the Royal Pharmaceutical Soing an urgent meeting with the health department. He said: " There is a serious issue here. Parliament restricted the title "pharmacy" so that, when people need medicines they know where to get a professional service and are protected from unscrupulous practices and dubious products. The council is determined to find a way to

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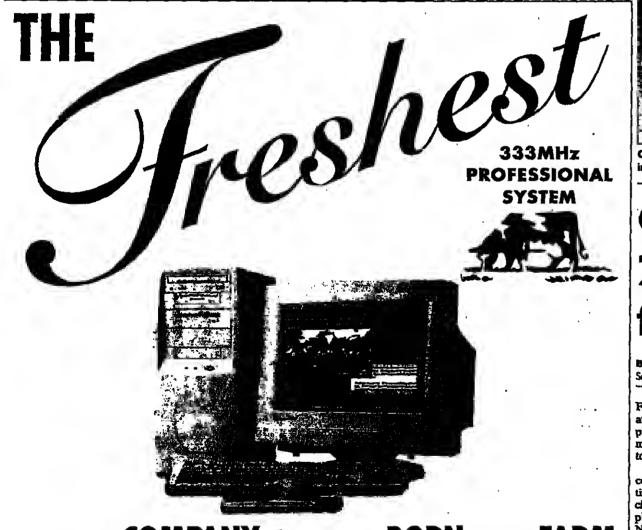
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Colleges need 25,000 places for childcare

By Glenda Cooper Social Affairs Correspondent

FURTHER education needs at least 25,000 new childcare places if it is to meet the demand from students according to the latest survey.

Some colleges believe they could fill their places three times over if they were to cut childcare fees and advertise places more widely says FE Now, the magazine for the further education sector.

Almost two-thirds of colleges say that if they increased the childcare they provide they could recruit more students and prevent more of them dropping out. No one knows the exact amount of childcare places provided by further education. although the Further Education Punding Council allocates £3m to 13,000 students. However some colleges use their gener-

al funds to spend more. The Daycare Trust is planning a national audit of childcare in further and higher education. It is expected to lead to a database of all college childcare provision and a telephone hotline for parents seek-

ing places by the year 2000. The FE Now survey of 150 colleges found wide discrepancy in the number of places offered by establishments. One in four colleges have no childcare places at all. Some colleges bave childcare places for one in



20 students others have one place for one student in 400. Overall, colleges feel that there is an immediate demand for a

50 per cent increase in childcare. More than a third only offer places for children over two years old which is likely to be because of the extra staff and space needed for younger children. Some 45 per cent of colleges did have places for six-month-old babies whereas only 30 per cent had places for

babies from three months. Cost is the crucial factor for many students, because at present they cannot claim for help if they are in foll time education.

"If you offer a course for free to people on benefit," says Pene Prior, student services manager at Swindon College, "but then charge £1.25 an hour then you have put it out of their reach again. We wouldn't dare advertise free childcare because we know the demand would be overwhelming."

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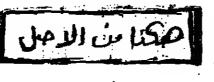
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Will the Gaullists deal with the Devil?

The French centre-right is tempted to negotiate with Le Pen. John Lichfield, in Vitrolles, asks whether the moderates will sell their souls

PORTENTOUS choral music. Flashing red, white and blue lights. Dramatic hush. Everyone looks to the right of the auditorium. The Great Man, asserting his greatness, strides in from the left, flanked by his bodyguards in jump-suits. Thunderous applause, rhythmic chanting, dancing in the aisles.

The Great Man is a short, balding, effeminate figure in a blue suit and a colourful tie; he looks like a young Hercule Poirot, at once compelling and slightly absurd. He is Bruno Mégret, the second power (and rising) oo the French far-right. He gives an effective speech, full of the usual mockery and paranoia and coded racism of the National Front, His central message - hefore tomorrow's regional and local elections - is "everything is going our way".

The sub-text is: "everything. is going my way." The most obvious victors in tomorrow's elections, covering 22 Freoch regions and 96 départements, plus overseas territories, will be of taking over virtually all the the Left. Ten months after coming to power in a general election, the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, should be able to claim victory in 17 out of the 22 regional cootests.

1992, the Left was flattened: the centre-right parties won in 20 regions, foreshadowing their crushing victory in the parliamentary election the following year. Mitterrandism was dead, said the pundits; the Left was likely to fall to the Left.



out of power for a generation. But six years later the Socialists, and their Communist and Green allies, are on the point levers of national and regional political power in France.

The only significant exception is the presidency, held by Jacques Chirac, the Gaullist, until 2002. But even Mr Chirac's In the last poll of its kind, in stronghold is predicted to disappear beneath the pink-redthe greater Paris area has been the political and financial playground of Mr Chirac's RPR par- ideas, leadership and fresh faces. regional president. ty for 26 years: tomorrow it is.

The predicted success of the Socialists and their allies is a tribute to the skill of Mr Jospin in finessing budgetary problems and keeping his troublesome alliance together. It is also a symptom of a rising economic barometer in France. It owes something, equally, to the incompetence of the centre-right parties, who have run a woefully flat and empty campaign. President Chirac's popularity is soar-

It does not take a math- In other words, a majority of

darker, explanation for the Left's likely success. The National Froot is predicted to gain its highest ever score - 16 coalitioo will win the elections. per cent - in regional elections. In 15 of the 17 regions in which the Left will top the poll, the NF will hold the balance of power. In this regioo - Provence-

work out that there is another,

Alpes-Côte d'Azur - there is a close, three-horse race and an outside chance that the National green tide. The Ile-de-France, ing with the economy but his Froot will top the poll. This friends and fraternal enemies on; would - although it is unlikely the centre-right remain bereit of - make Jean-Marie Le Pen the

gions will vote for right-wing parties tomorrow, but the vote will be solit between traditional right and far right and the left-wing

The leaders of the centreright parties are refusing adamantly to work with the National Front, which is almost the only thing to their credit. They will therefore have to work with left-wing minority regional governments all over France.

Something similar happened the parliameotary elections sembly to the success of the NF

tance himself from possible fail-Gauging the real or potential streogth of the Far Right in ure, rather than fight for victo-France is a difficult business: This compares sharply with there are many reasons to believe, and hope, that the Nathe tireless efforts of his Num-

tional Front may have reached ber Two and undeclared rival, Bruno Mégret, who has been its high-water mark. Disapproval of the NF remains huge working the ground in the (well over 70 per ceot). The Bouches-de-Rhooe (greater Marseilles) area for mooths. economy is recovering. Jean-Marie Le Pen faces more dis-The victory last year of his sension within the party than wife, Catherine, in the mayoral ever before. He has run a poor, election in Vitrolles, in the and lazy, campaign for the pres- northern outer suburbs of Maridency of the Greater Provence seilles, makes Mégret a greater last year. Mr Jospin owes his region. Despite the closeness of hero in these parts than Le Pen. himself, as the man who could majority in the National As- the polls, he has made on ap- The name of the NF leader was pull the whole of the French pearance in the South in the last scarcely mentioned at the paranti-Left together and reposition ematical genius, however, to woters in almost all French re- in splitting the anti-Left vote. week As usual, he prefers to dis- ty's last big regional rally.

Bad dream team: Catherine and Bruno Mégret waving to the crowds as they arrive in Vitrolles for a National Front campaign meeting.

The success of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extremist party has split the rightwing vote across France, allowing the Socialists to gain victory after victory

Photograph: Reuters

Whatever its internal difficulties, the NF now sprawls across enough political territory to make life difficult for the traditional Right. This is frustrating for the grass-roots and, increasingly, a temptation.

Throughout this campaign, there have been angry centreright noises demanding freedom to make deals with the NF after the election. These voices, especially strident in the lle-de-France and here in the Midi, have been shouted down by the party leaderships, which insist that the NF is beyond the moral and political pale.

At his final rally in Vitrolles. Mr Mégret predicted that this position would become untenable: he said many centre-right regional councillors would, in a close vote, support the NF, oot the Left. Hence his comment: "We have not yet won the electoral battle but we have already woo the political battle ... everything is going our way."

The traditional right may, or may oot, keep its members in line this time. But this issue - to fraternise or not with the NFwill remain the most important and destructive issue in French party politics into the next century. Much will depend oo the rise of Mr Mégret. Although allegedly even more extreme in his private views than Mr Le Pen, be is regarded, and regards it sharply to the right.

Milosevic rules out chance of UN mediation in Kosovo

By Andrew Gumbel

GOVERNMENT Jeaders in Belgrade firmly rejected any international mediation to solve the crisis in Kosovo yesterday, saying they were ready to open dialogue with leaders of the province's Albanian majority population at any time but that Kosovo's status was strictly a Serbian internal matter.

With time running out for President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia to meet international demands for a settlement to the Kosovo issue, he appeared to have adopted a strategy of temporary detente towards the Albanians combined with a vigorous refusal to let the outside world dictate terms for him. A demonstration staged by

more than 50,000 students and other young Albanians in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, passed off without so much as a genuine dialogue. glimpse of a Serb policeman the second time this week that the Serbs have held back from their usual practice of breaking up demonstrations with overwhelming force.

government negotiating team, led by the deputy prime minister, Ratko Markovic, waited in military police were still



Slobodan Milosevic faces new UN pressure

Pristina for a second day on the off-chance that Albanian leaders would accept their invitation to talk to them. The Albanians, backed by the US state departdenounced Mr ment. Markovie's delegation as a piece of propaganda aimed at scoring points, not opening a

"It looked like a veritable carnival - it was not an invitation for talks, but an attempt to undermine them," said Fehmi Agani, deputy leader of the LDK, the main Albanian par-At the same time, a Serbian ty in Kosovo. The Albanians said it was impossible to consider negotiations while para-

clustered thickly around a oumber of villages in the Drenica region - site of two onslaughts by Serbian forces in the last two weeks in which more than 80 Albanians perished.

The six-oation Contact Group, which met in London on Monday, issued a number of conditions for President Milosevic to fulfil on pain of further international sanctions, including acceptance of a European fact-finding mission and initiation of a "meaningful dialogue" without preconditions.

Yesterday, however, as the Council of Europe's parliamentary council leader Leni Fischer visited Belgrade for talks with Mr Milosevic, the Serbs said they would not accept the mission. They also laid down specific conditions for talks namely, that any solution for bania. Kosovo would have to be found within Serbia's borders.

Like Belgrade, western governments have rejected the notion of independence for Kosovo, but they have not ruled out converting it into a full republic in Yugoslavia alongside Serbia and Montenegro.

The Contact Group will meet again on March 25 to de- lution were to be found. For the cide whether Mr Milosevic's attitude merits the imposition of look slim.

economic sanctions. According to diplomatie sources. NATO and the major powers are seriously considering the creation of a military cordon sanitaire around Yugoslavia including NATO troops in northern Albania, the expansion of the UN military mission in Macedonia, a troop presence in Bulgaria and a naval monitoring mission off the coast of Montenegro.

Pressure is also mounting on Kosovo's Albanian leadership to renounce its dreams of independence. Western governments fear an independent Kosovo would only exacerbate tensions with Belgrade, and might tempt parts of Macedonia and even Montenegro to secede from their respective states and join a nascent Greater Al-

The LDK will have great difficulty in dropping its independence demand, however, as that is the plank on which its support is built.

it a specification One European foreign affairs minister, Piero Fassino of which will top radios many times its Italy, said vesterday that both sides would have to relax their intransigent attitudes if any somoment, the chances of that

Serbia told proposals 'not good enough'

gave the cholest of welcomes to the latest offer of President Slohodan Milosevic to the insurin Kosovo, making clear it would not be enough to reverse the sanctions imposed in London against Yugoslavia by leading international powers, writes Rupert Corowell.

Mr Milosevic's proposals were "not good enough", Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary said, indicating that Europe entirerefused to meet a delegation the crisis by Mr Milosevic, and

The European Union yesterday from Belgrade this week, dismissing the exercise as little more than a publicity stunt.

Last night EU foreign mingent ethnic Albaniao minority isters at their informal meeting were exploring possible solutions, involving some kind of special status for the province, but within the borders of the existing rump Yugoslavia. As a German official put it, "there must be more autonomy, but we can't have outright separation."

Europe is adamant the isolation of Belgrade will continty sympathised with the Amanian majority in the province who
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Mr Cook was confident that the Suharto that acceptance of the tighter economic squeeze im- International Monetary Fund's posed by the six-nation Contact stabilisation plan offered the es-Group on Monday will bite - cape from Indonesia's financial and bite quickly.

According to the Foreign Secretary, the regime had been "stunned" by the speed of Western reaction, and was especially alarmed by the suspension of Derek Fatchett, Minister of financial support for Yu- State at the Foreign Office goslavia's privatisation pro- said, underlining the risk that gramme. "If they can't sell their failure to deal with Indonesia (privatisation) bonds, they cannot finance their deficit."

turmoil. With its refusal to comply

with the initial IMF recom-

mendations, the country was "entering uncharted waters," risked undoing all the good work dooe by Thailand, Meanwhile, the foreign min- Malaysia and South Korea in

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Suharto finds the old magic losing its power

NOGOROJO (the came meaos "dragon king") was forged in the Mataram period, and has mendak stooms on the handle and a hilt of ceodana wood. Its zig-zag blade is 12 inches long; the scabbard goldcovered. Nogorojo is a kris, or sacred dagger, and was handed down to Haji Hadisukismo by his grandfather who, like him, was a Javanese mystic.

"I was born a peasant," says the old man, "but oow I am the chief of this village. My childreo are headmeo as well, and people come to me for advice from all over Java, Nogorojo has the power nf life. All my life I have been helped and supported by Nogorojo." The dagger is geo-tly restored to its scabbard and, no, says Haji Hadisukismn, there can be nn photographs.

A few years ago, he had a visitor from Jakarta who came with a purpose: to buy Nogorojo, and take it to the capital. Haji Hadisukismo was oot tempted, although the nffer was remarkable - not only was the man offering millions of rupiah, he was acting on behalf of President Suharto himself. "Suharto has many kris and other adviser to his predecessor,

Indonesian leader hangs on grimly, writes Richard Lloyd Parry

in Yogyakarta

how powerful Nogorojo is." For all the modernity and

bustle of its cities, Indooesia is a superstitious country in which ancieot patterns of belief exist alongside modern religious practices. In Borneo, Dayak people combine traditional religioo with the Catholic Mass. In Java, the most populated and politically dominant of the Indooesian islands, mystics like Haji Hadisukismo hear supernatural voices, heal and tell fortuoes. Few Javanese take such practices more seriously, or are regarded with more awe, than President Suharto.

Mr Suharto is also known to consult dukun, or sorcerers. According to Haji Hadisukismo, who worked as a mystic tics of the ancieot Javanese

Sukarno, the President bathes in water brought from a lake on the sacred Mt Lawu. He is a devotee of the wayang kulit, or shadow puppet theatre, with its suggestive and allegorical tales.

A story circulating in Jakarta tells of a meeting of ministers held by Mr Suharto to discuss a knotty matter of state. Instead of talking, they were treated to a puppet performance of great beauty and mystery. At the eod, Mr Suharto said: "I trust my wishes are clear," and left the room, leaving the anxious ministers racking their brains to work out the

And Mr Suharto's use of tra-

dition extends beyond magic.

Compared to other long-lasting

dictatorships like that of Mao Tse-Tung or the late god-presideot Kim Il Sung of North Korea, Mr Suharto's has been remarkable for the unobtrusurrounding Mr Suharto is as ta, the ancient Javanese capital sivenes of his personal style strong as that of shriller and and the complete absence of a personality cult. But personal more declamatory leaders. "He modesty, inconspicuousness is very, very clever at using culture to portray himself as a traemotion were the characterisditional Javanese ruler, literally a king," says Mohtar Masud, a rulers: in his own impersocal sociology professor at Gajah

Shadow land: Traditional Javanese puppet shows, with their suggestive, allegorical tales, are a favourite of Mr Suharto

where Mr Suharto was educat-

ed. The President's cultivation

of junior aides, many from the

military, whom he strategically

shuffles, demoting and banish-

ing those who become too am-

bitious, is typically Javanese, as

and self-effacing way, the aura Mada University in Yogyakar- is his reluctance to step down. prepares for his succession and According to some academics,

> hiding anger and emotions." says Daniel Sparringa of Airlingga University in Surabaya. to the point when the walnu will Ordinary people have lost the ability to protest." To a traditional king, power

the elevation of Javanese virtues

and a distaste for direct criticism

has helped Mr Suharto to main-

tain power. "There is such val-

ue placed oo hierarchy and on

indivisible, and to compromise it by naming a successor is to risk losing everything. "I think it aquite simple: he's very superstitious," says a Western and plane crashes which In-

admits that he is mortal, then he will die." Wahyu is the name such as restraint, refinement for the mystical quality, sometimes described as a divine light, which surrounds the Jais still strong and it has to be Suharto for oow," says Haj Hadisukismo. "But we are close pass to someone else."

To many that moment seems closer every day. One of the portents of imminent change is disasters and disruptions in nature like the forest fires, drought, crop failures, food shortages, diplomat. "He's afraid that if he donesia has suffered in the past thing fell apart."

few months. "Many Javanese feel as if some kind of doomsday is coming," says Prof Masud. "The natural disasters delegitimise him in people's eyes." In 1962, Haji Hadisukismo was working for Sukarno. Prompted by supernatural voices, he warned him that some advisers he was bringing into the palace meant him no good. In 1965, Indonesia's Year of Living Dangerously, Sukarno was deposed by Mr Suharto. "I told him: 'Father, you're the chaufmerica retu

Minking of hus and

computer"

feur of Indonesia, but if you're not careful you'll hit a tree', says the old man. "But he didn't listen and three years late every-

Chinglish is victor in HK's battle of tongues

English as the medium of board, said: "It's not meant to instruction in Hoog Kong schools was given oew life yesterday wheo 14 schools successfully appealed against a government ruling that they "punished". must use Chinese to teach their

The government'a attempts to introdoce mother toogue. teaching have incited a great deal of passion in Hong Kong where, remarkably, four out of five secondary students are taught in English.

Parents fear that children atteoding Chinese-medium schools will loose out in the job marketplace. Or as David To, the principal of the United Christian College said yesterday, understood in English. after hearing his school had failed in its appeal to continue

At schools where the appeals . vour by the incoming adminiswere successful, there were en- tration, it was in fact initiated thusiastic celebrations. However by the outgoing colonial regime.

be an award." And he insisted that schools which were required to teach in Chinese, as from September, are oot being Yet this is the general perception. Helen Yu, Hong Kong's

Director of Education, is exasperated by this attitude. She argues that the current school system is turning out children who speak "Chinglish", in other words without a good grasp of either language. A visit to one of the Chinese English language schools quickly reinforces Mrs Yu's view. Not only the children, but many of the teachers, are struggling to make themselves

Although the move to Chioese medium instruction is will feel they are second class". post-colonial nationalistic fer-

the side of those who advocate mother-tongue teaching. Not only does it tend to mean that children learn more in general but they also have a better chance of learning foreign languages, such as English, if they are systematically taught as foreign languages. However, Hong Kong parents do not seem to be greatly swayed by educational theory. Those with children in schools switching to Chinese are desperately trying to move them to English medium schools. There is talk of defiance and revolt against the oew rules.

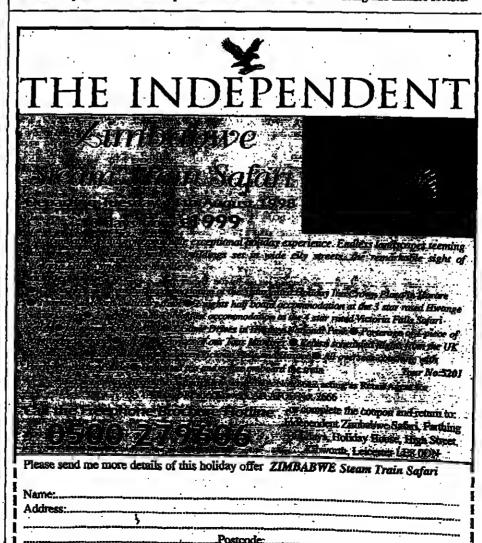
English remains an official language in Hong Kong, alongside Chinese. Since the handover it has become less prevalent in official circles, but remains the main language of teaching in English, the students sometimes seen as an act of commerce, particularly in the trading and finance sectors.

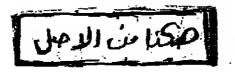
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There's a Great Deal going on

Crazy daze for inmates of New York, the world's biggest asylum

13/FOREIGN

To be in New York is to be an inmate in the world's biggest asylum. There is never any peace, day or night. Even here in The Independent's midtown office, 21 floors up and behind double-glazed windows, there is no escaping the racket. Right now, police sirens are wailing as if Armageddon has

The cacophory of New York is part of what gives it its enersy, of course. And energy is the whole point of this city. But sometimes, just sometimes, when your batteries are low and your nerves are ragged, it can



all get too much. One especially loud car horn is suddenly more

to the mountains, the Hamptons, even New Jersey, before migraine sets in.

Even if you pay attention only very slightly, it is hard not to conclude that a goodly portion of your fellow travellers on this city's pavements are a dime short of a dollar. Some are obviously loony, other merely eccentric, but it is all the raving that worries me most.

It is not just people cursing than your brain can bear. Get at telephones that won't take

about something they simply cannot help accosting complete. strangers to tell them about it.

It happened to me one day last week as I was trying to buy a sandwich just across from the United Nations. The guy came in the door like a torpedo, screeched to a halt behind my left shoulder and proceeded to excoriate me for not rising up against basically everyone but especially against the police

turning their attention to se- cross the street. So many peo- as if ordering the insides of a curing a rental out of town. Flee ple in New York seem so con- New York sandwich wasn't alsumed with anger or frustration ready brain-taxing enough without this in my ear. I ignored him first, then I wanted to smash his head in with the gherkin bottle behind the counter. Finally, he left and I just felt depressed.

> ddie Izzard, whom I school, thought I might be the one about to get hit when I asked his advice at a party thrown recently at Sotheby's for the Broadway première of Art, no, he would not comment.

me out of here, you want to their quarters or at taxi-cabs cut- department and the corrupt scream. No wonder friends are ting them down as they try to crooks running the UN. Lordy, packing them in in the West Tasmina Reza, who End. Across the room stood none other than Sean Connery, attending as co-producer and holder of the film rights. Eddie knows Connery from the set of the upcoming Avergers film. Did I dare go np and ask him to comment on the brownsha surrounding his knighthood - or rather his oon-knightvagoely koow from hood? Eddie's reply suggested that if I did, I might get biffed. I tried anyway, assuming Eddie was joking, and Connery was

gruff but entirely polite. And,

wrote Art, is regretting talking that night to Newsweek. The magazine quoted her saying she was fed up with her own country, France, because no producers in Paris showed interest in the play or three others she has written and has turned oo her for staging the last two in commercial theatres instead of state-subsidised houses.

"The French meotality is to keep it small," she was cited as saying. "If you have ambition. you are considered egocentric. I got no help with Art."

Unfortunately, the comments were reported from here by the French newspaper Le Monde. Reza weot ballistic, claiming she had been misquoted, and demanded that an apology be printed. Why she thought Le Monde was at fault is not clear.

t seems there is an explanation for the explosion of police sirens twenty-one floors below my office window. The local branch of the Chase Manhattan bank is, as I write, in the midst of a hold-up, gunshots and all. Ah, New York.

America returns to the corner shop

The US love affair with the mall may be over, writes Mary Dejevsky, in Washington

DRIVE north west ont of central Washington and you soon enter a noman's land of glass and marble walls, the first wave of suburban malls that line the freeway exits from the US capital. In a few months, though, some of those walls will start crashing down, felled in the name of bringmore human scale to the great

American shopping experience. The doomed walls belong to the Mazza Gallerie, a vast cuboid huilding. Inside, though you would hardly know to look at from the road, are wo department stores - the upmarket Neiman Marcus and the downmarket Filene's Basement - a selection of speciality shops and plenty of empty premises.

The walls make Mazza Gallerie a fortress: secure and air conditioned, but hardly somewhere to pop into for a loaf of bread or a bag of jelly beans.

rictor in

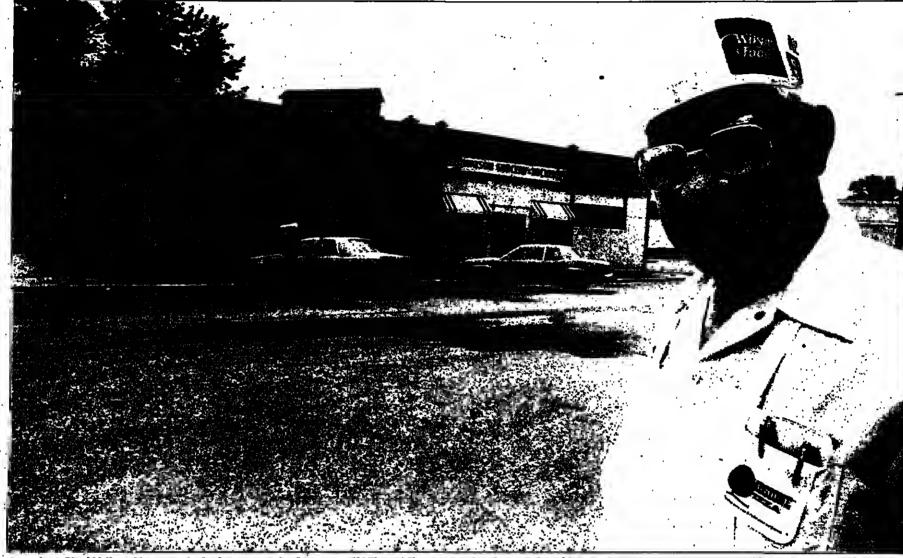
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120

Now, it has been bought by a much-praised Chicago developer, Dan McCaffery, and is to be made over, starting with the removal of its most distinctive feature: the dauntg outside walls. According to Mr McCaffery, the main aim is to make and accessible.

In effect, the enclosed shopping centre is to be turned inside out and made to face the streets. The individual shops will be made to appeal to passers-by and local residents, not just to car-borne shoppers with several hours at their disposal. The more indoor complexes that have shops should, in Mr McCaffery's been, or are about to be, shorn of ant shopping and office complex built words, be "people-friendly" and foster a sense of community.

If Mazza Gallerie, built in the Seveoties, were the only enclosed shopping centre being subjected to this



American Pie: Wallace Heggestad, the last grocer in the town of Wilson, Minnesota, who shut up shop 14 years ago

though, it is just one of a dozen or tre. dubbed the "de-malling" of America. Nor is it limited to relatively prosperous suburban districts, like

be put down to the ambitions of one ed. A similar project has just been ished. Similar operations have aldeveloper and the eternal American started across the city, in the de-ready been completed in two other quest for something new. In fact, pressed area south west of the cen-

Here, the Waterside Mall, a githeir walls in a process that is being 30 years ago, obliterating the existing grid layout of the streets and chopping the district in two, is itself to be chopped up into more man-

suburbs of Washington, outside open complexes, where shops front Chicago, and in California and Flori-

Taking their one from the successful revivals of Manhattan and rates have been accompanied by a surge of investment and the revival Friendship Heights in Washington, ageable pieces. The street grid is to of city living, developers are sensing, they face outwards, beckoning their idea whose time is passing.

Photograph: Topham Picturepoint late Nineties makeover, that could where the Mazza Gallerie is locat- be restored, and the walls demol- a change in customers' taste and pri- customers, allowing them to linger orities. The trend in new out-of-town on the pavement.

shopping ceotres is for a return to Transforming fortress mails into people-friendly shopping streets and on to the main road and circle squares is oot an easy task. But it is evidence, along with the nostalgic rearound a giant car park. There are sort to words like "liveable" and signs, too, still small and hesitant, that stores may be starting to move back "community", that the strict sepacentral Chicago, where lower crime into some of the towns and cities they ration of housing and commerce left 30 years ago. And when they do which leaves so much of American move back, as in central Chicago, suburbia without a heart may be an

Washington cries foul over JFK mementoes

By David Usborne

An auction of John F Kennedy memorabilia in New York next week is certain to arouse keen interest - after all, the Kennedys are the nearest thing America has to a royal family. But as the 600-odd lots were unveiled yesterday, a hitch had arisen. Should some of them be oo sale at all?

Among the hordes milling through Guernsey's, a small New York auction house, were men and women in suits from Washington. Their mission: to retrieve a oumber of items that officials believe belong to the nation.

The catalogue includes JFK's presideotial yacht, Honey Fitz, which alone could fetch several million dollars, as well as his sailing boat Flash II. It also features a large number of items gathered by his White House secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, after his assassination. She died in 1995 and bequeathed her collection to a friend, Robert White, who hopes to build a museum from the sale's proceeds to house those mementoes he is not putting into the sale.

But Ms Lincoln may not have been entitled to all of what she laid her hands on. Yesterday, the National Archives started negotiating to have some lots withdrawn, including Kennedy's inauguration speech, a drop-leaf signing table, notes and correport to the nation about the 1961 Berlin crisis and the portable record player that the President took almost everywhere on his travels.

Members of the Kennedy family have also approached Guernsey's with worries about ownership. John F Kennedy Jr is helieved to want some items given back to the family. Guernsey's head, Arlen Ettinger, appears unimpressed. "The Kennedy's have money. They can come and hid oo anything they want," she remarked.

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Cancer in retreat: cases drop and fewer lives are lost in US

By David Usborne in New York

IN A FIRST unmistakable sign that both new therapies and changes in lifestyle are having a beneficial impact, the numbers of cases of cancer have begun to retreat in the United States, as have the numbers of deaths from the disease.

"Cancer is conquerable and rogress is being made," Dr James Marks of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said, unveiling the most recent report on cancer in the US. The burden of public fear should begin to lift."

It is the first time that cancer. which still kills 1,500 Americans each day, has been in retreat na-

tionwide since records of the disease were first compiled in the Thirties. Overall, the report shows, the incidence of cancer cases fell by 0.7 per cent per year between 1990 and 1995. Deaths from cancer over the period fell by an average of 0.5 per cent.

The picture, nonetheless, is uneven, both as between different kinds of cancer and as between dif-

advantaged people and for African-Americans, particularly men.

Experts pointed to increased education about the hazards of tobac- in colon and rectum cancer, where co in explaining an average annual 1.1 cases dropped an average of 2.3 per per cent drop in lung-cancer cases. cent. Mouth and throat cancer was More generally, credit is given to much down by 1.8 per cent annually and increased screening for instance for leukaemias showed a 1.0 per cent

The statistics are less hopeful for dis-forms of treatment. Breast-cancer rates have apparently levelled out after climbing rapidly for two decades.

The sharpest drop was reported

melanomas, or skin cancer, rose during by an average of 2.5 per cent.

The data is bleakest, however, for black men, who have the highest cancer incidence rate of any group in the country and for whom rates are still climbing. This is caused particularly by growing numbers of cases of prostrate cancer. "Some segments of

ferent segments of the population breast tumours in women, and new drop. By contrast, the incidence of the population] have not benefited equally," observed John Seffrin, of the American Cancer Society.

According to the society, one in four deaths in the US are caused by cancer. More than half a million Americans are expected to die from some form of cancer this year. One in two American men can expect to develop cancer in their lifetime.

Hindu nationalist chief left in limbo as electoral alliance falls to pieces

By Peter Popham in Ludmow

AB Vajpayce, parliamentary leader of the Hindu nationalist BJP, should by now be packing his bags ready for removal to 7 Race Course Road, the prime minister's official residence. Instead he is twisting in the wind.

He has two big problems. The first and most urgent is that a crucial ally in the south, the former film star Javalalitha, who faces serious corruption charges after her term as chief minister of Tamil Nadu, refuses to back him. It was said that she wanted her proxies to be the ministers of finance and law: alternatively, that she wanted the dismissal of her deadly rival who now runs the southern state. Whatever it was, Mr Vajpayee refused to grant it, and Jayalalitha pulled ber 27 MPs. He was left well short of a majority.

Last night the head of state, President KR Narayanan, met leaders of the other maio groupings, Courress, the United Front (UF) and the two main communist parties, to see if they had any bright ideas. But as both Congress and the UF are effectively leaderless, and as it was their latest quarrel which brought on the recent, unwelcome election, no one was optimistic.

Mr Vajpayee's immediate problem stems from the treachery of a dubious ally. But his other problem is more fundamental: he has proved unable. after nearly 50 years of trying, to amass the sort of broad national support that the Congress Party used to be able to take for granted. The disputed religious site in Avodhya, symbol of India and the world's doubts tinues to haunt him.

The BJP overflows with patriotic emotion; it stands for India strong, self-confident and with nuclear missiles targeting Peking. But in its heart of hearts India doesn't buy it. Ayodhya

explains why not. It is a small town in the fertile plains of Uttar Pradesh, east of Lucknow in the north of the country. To call it dilapidated would be a kindness: it looks like one of the frontline towns in Bosnia or Croatia in the heat of the recent wars there. It is a



about Mr Vajpayee's party, con- Explosive event: Hindu fundamentalists attacking the leth-century Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya in December 1992. Their actions destroyed the building Photograph Popperfoto/AFP

which the people inhabit with- they destroyed the mosque. out complaint, knowing nothing

But one of the ruins is special. It was demolished so thoroughly that not one stone remains on top of another. This was the mosque of Bahri

Oo 6 December 1992, a crowd of Hindu zealots, including the president of the BJP. LK Advani, Mr Vajpayee's right-hand man, and several of town of ruins, crumbling car- the party's MPs, gathered here

casses of long-ago invasions and while police looked on and has been erased. For the place of Rama, "lord of the uni- been found, but then so is the national humiliation was gone

It was an explosive event, unleashing a volcano of Hindu versus Muslim communal anger in which perhaps 2,500 people power it was, as Mr Vajpayee died across the country. Mr Ad- later admitted, "the party's vani and several other top leaders were arrested, and the RSS. the paramilitary force that stands behind the BJP, was banned. But for the moment at least, Mr Vaipayee was unrepentant. Weeks after the de-

movement's finest hour. But for Mr Vajpayee and the others in the party who crave national

worst miscalculation". It is hard to grasp why the destruction of a seedy old building, unused for religious purposes since 1949, should dog the Indian imagination in the way it does. The ostensible reason molition he declared that the is that the spot on which the mosque was "a symbol of shame mosque stood was the birth-

> feebled by age and corture, Shin In-young hobbled out of a South

> Korean prison after 31 years of

mostly solitary confinement and

lamented the face of those left

behind. "There are many more

inside," said Mr Shin, 69. "I feel

Mr Shin was one of 74 po-

litical prisoners released yes-

sorry when I think of them."

and appropriated by nationalists as their divine mascot. Like thousands of Hindu temples across the north, it was national pride to unify them 150 destroyed by fanatical Muslims years ago, they hit on Ayodhya during the numerous invasions that wracked the country-supposedly in 1528, on the orders and rebuilding the temple have of Bahur, founder of the been the most important projects Mughal empire - and replaced

with a mosque. The temple's erasure and no archeological evidence has was a watershed. The symbol of set the electorate on fire.

and humiliated Hindus began, chafing at the British yoke and casting around for a symbol of and the long-vanished temple there. Demolishing the mosque nursed by nationalists since.

Ayodhya has always been a potent rallying cry for the BJP.

Hindu zealots, it was their verse" in the Hindu pantheon birth of Rama. When the abject -replaced by a makeshift temple in a tent, a messy ongoing wrangle in the courts, and a dire warning of the apocalypse awaiting any government that ventures down the communal-

The bloodshed that followed the mosque's demolition drove home the danger of igniting such raw emotion in a union as fragile as India's. But Mr Vajpayee has been unable to find replacement are conjectural as But the destruction in 1992 any comparably effective way to

muscles in order to stave off

growing civil unrest over the se-

vere food shortage. Earlier this

week, the Korean Buddhist

Sharing Movement from South

Korea claimed that its survey of.

refugees on the North Korean-

Chinese border suggested that

up to 3 million people had died

in North Korea over the past two

years because of the lack of food.

Diplomats cautioned that the

survey was not scientific and in

their opinion over-estimated

to put in place a permanent

peace agreement on the Kore-

Pyongyang's posturing at

Norway nets Russian spies

A Norwegian official said he helped trap five Russian spies by feeding Moscow fake sccrets in a career as e double agent that echoed the Cold War. "It's the roughest job you can do." Svein Lamark. 47, an official at the Ministry of Local Government, said a day after Norway said it was barring five Russian diplomats from the country for spying. "They wanted to know a great deal ... all types of secret documents on defence ... and of course as much as possible about the prime minister's office," he

Ray in coma

James Earl Ray, assassin of Martin Luther King Jr.; has slipped into a coma. Jerry Ray said that his brother fell into a coma on Wednesday at Nashville Memorial Hospital, where he was admitted with complications from liver dis-AP. Nashville

Soft landing

As a gesture to an old ally facing hard economic times, the Clinton administration has agreed to release the Thai government from a contract agreement to buy U.S.-made jet fighters it no longer can afford, administration officials said. President Bill Clinton was expected to discuss the arrangement in a White House meeting with Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leek-AP, Washington

Death fall

A British real estate manager has jumped to his death from the top floor of a highrise huilding, the Bahrain Tribune reported. Nigel Hoare, a senior manager of the Bahraini property firm Cluttons, jumped from the 18th floor of the Diplomat Tower here a day after he filed a false report of his car being stolen, the newspaper AP, Manama

Vanunu move

Supporters of nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu said they would push for his early release from jail after Israel allowed him out of 12 years of solitary confinement. The Justice Ministry said Vanunu, 43, was able for the first time on Thursday to mix with other prisoners at the jail in Ashkelon where he is serving an 18-year sentence for espionage. Reuters, Jerusalem

United rights

The UN announced is launching a joint poster advertising campaign with Italian clothing firm Benetton to celebrate this year's 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Write stuff

Terry Anderson, a former chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press who spent six years as a hostage in Lebanon, will the moment is also probably tied join the faculty of the E.W. to the resumption of the four-Scripps School of Journalism party talks that are attempting at Ohio University. Anderson, an associate professor at Columbia University's Gradnate School of Journalism since 1996, accepted a oneyear contract to teach at Ohio as a Scripps Howard visiting professional.

UN post

Jiri Dienstbier, former dissident and first post-communist foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, will take over as UN human rights investigator for former Yugoslavia, officials said. Diensthier succeeds former Finnish Defense Minister Elisabeth Refin

Mebrow home

Lifeline for children as funds flood in

By Amanda Kelly

THE INDEPENDENT'S Iraq appeal has reached a total of

The figure has surpassed the expectations of everyone involved and will allow us to supply the Iraqi children with even more life-saving supplies than first envisaged. Professor Soad Tabaqchali.

medical director of Medical

Aid for Iraqi Children

(MAIC), estimates our funds will allow us to treat well over 2.000 children. The bulk of the money will be spent on anti-cancer medicines but we will also be pro- lished in 1994, she has viding the children with urgent

Howard Bell of CARE International UK, which is already helping to feed 10,000 children in Iraqi hospitals, said: "The absence of basic medicines is having tragic humanitarian consequences. But the lack of basic nutrition is an equally desperate problem which affects thousands of

shortages of vital supplements for infants such as lactose-free infant formula. This life-saving product treats children who have developed lactose-intol-



crance as a result of chronic malnutrition, gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea.

Professor Tahaqchali, who has extensive contacts in Iraqi hospitals, is helping us put together e delivery of the medicines and supplies most urgently required.

Since MAIC was estaborganised the sending of medicines, milk and medical equipmeet including incubators worth approximately £323,400 to paediatric hospitals all over

The receipt and use of the medicines we send will be verified by staff at CARE (0171 379 5247) and MAIC (0171 724 3379) as well as other independent sources. Both charities are happy to answer "There are especially acute questions and accept donations

after our appeal ends. Please send cheques, made out to The Independent Iraq Appeal, to PO Box No 6870. London E14 5BT.

Prisoner releases bring only scorn on Seoul leader

North Korea goes on war footing

By Teresa Poole in Pekang

NORTH Korea was yesterday put on "wartime mobilisation". apparently to coincide with seasonal military exercises. The restrictions, which

cleared the streets of Pyongyang of people, have also come into force just as Korean peace negotiations are due to restart in Geneva, and as the country is approaching the mid-March period when the official state media said grain supplies would run out. North Korea last week said daily rations had been cut from 300 grams in Jan-

uary to 100 grams in March. North Korea-watchers in Peking said they believed the war-footing was connected with military exercises which usually take place in the spring. Foreign diplomats in Py-

wartime mobilisatioo yesterday morning when they were issued with a government statement. Under the instructions, only North Koreans will be allowed into the country and foreign residents will be restricted to Pyongyang except when given specific permission for trips ongyang were told of the "related to the food assistance".

STRICKEN with cancer and en- cerday in a sweeping amnesty by million people affected by the President Kim Dae-jung that amnesty were traffic offenders brought the ration's new leader, and petty criminals. himself once a prisoner of coneral of the South Korean chap-

science, only scorn from human. rights groups that once were among his chief supporters. "We are very disappointed,"

the nation's largest civil rights group, Minkahyup, said, noting that the vast majority of the 5.5

a ruling which could well impede the work of international aid agencies in the country. The statement added: This means that the wartime system and order applies not only to the regular armed forces, but also to the national economy and overall social life." Foreign residents in Pyongyang reported

terday.

Oh Wan-ho, secretary-zen-

ter of Amnesty International,

only part of the long-term pris-

oners of conscience because

they feared a backdash from the

country's conservative groups."

that the city was deserted vesabout what is going on inside

North Korea made it difficult for diplomats to judge whether anything more than normal civilian drills were going on. There was speculation that the clampdown

an peninsula. Today in Geneva, preliminary talks will convene between the two Koreas, United States and China, ahead of Monday's resumption of formal might be the military flexing its negotiations.

Marchers call for resignations over power cuts

New Zealand's biggest city as the mn- said march organiser Hilary Ord. nicipal supplier said further cuts were

About 100 protestors marched down

prolonged power cuts in the centre of dear vision for its (Mercury's) future."

Protesters called for full compensation for lost business and wages since the unprecedented failure of all four main

AUCKLAND (Reuters) - Auckland board. "I want to see people with skills two restored cables and an energy conresidents today marched in protest at the in strategic management, people with a servation campaign have restored near supplies to meet demand. The onestion normal conditions downtown.

But Mercury has said it cannot guarantee continuous supply until a temporary overhead power link is installed into the city, which could take another four the main thoroughfare, calling for the power cables to the central business dis-weeks. Mercury spokesman Matthew resignation of the Mercury Energy trict on 20 February. Extra generators, Bolland said the company faced a tricky

for next week is how many people will come back. If more come back and the weather stays at this heat, we are likely to need even greater savings." he said. "The reality is that if we get more

. neonle back and we can't increase the savings then we are likely to have cuts."

Welcome to Moneyworld

Publicity is off the menu for Hirst

Cash registers are ringing at Britain's theme parks,

thrilling developers -and children alike.

Tim Hulse reports

"A SIGN above the gate said Welcome to Bullfrog's World!" Even I was excited, and my kids were buzzing. The great metal gates swung open and m we swarmed, carried along by the enthusiasm of the crowd. And what a sight met our eyes! The place was fantastic!"

It sounds good, doesn't it? And if Bullfrog's World really existed, then no doubt the crowds would be flocking there this weekend as the nation's theme parks begin to reopen after the winter break. But the words of the satisfied customer above come from the introduction to a computer game called Theme Park, the aim of which is to construct your own imaginary park. All you need are the skills "to make people happy while simultaneously taking them for as much money as possible ... because when you play Theme Park, you're riding a financial whirlwind."

And how. Business is booming in Britain's theme parks and more and more developers all over the country are looking to play the game for real. Barely a month goes by without news of some fresh project. At the beginning of March, plans were unveiled for a £500m complex

at Magor, ocar Newport in Monmouthshire, incorporating rides, restaurants and hotels on 750 acres of land around Pencoed Castle. In February, developers of the proposed 1.000ft Festival Gardens Tower in Liverpool announced that the first 30 of its 90 floors would . form a "vertical theme park" based on a jungle theme, with a 30-floor waterfall. Oo London's South Bank, a £17m "wine theme park" called Vinopolis is expected to open next summer. And, of course, in Greenwich construction is under way on the best-known theme park of them all, the Millennium Dome.

1. La 🕹 🗲

rance in

As competition mounts, the established theme parks are responding to the challenge. Typical is Alton Towers, the country's most successful, with around 2.75 million visitors a year. Today it opens its latest ride to the public, a whiteknuckle experience called Oblivion, which features a facefirst vertical drop at 110km/h with G-forces pushing 4.5. It cost about £12m to build and a range of merchandise includes an Oblivion condom "for those wishing to experience

a second ride of a lifetime". Meanwhile, at Legoland on Thursday, members of the press and a select group of children were granted a preview of its latest attraction, Castle-Land, which also goes public today. At a cost of £4m, the two-storey castle features a in roller-coaster called The Drag-



Towering profits: Legoland, which is targeted at younger children, pulled in 1.4 million visitors in its first year

on Ride. It's pretty tame stuff compared to Oblivion, but will

no doubt prove to be thrilling enough for the park's target audience of under-12s. The minister for tourism, Tom Clarke, was also in attendance. He had a ride on the Dragon and could be seen to duck at the point where the track dips steeply down into a tunnel. "I thought I was going to be decapitated,"

he said afterwards. Opened two years ago, Legoland pulled in 14 million visitors in its first year and has risen to third place in the theme park rankings behind Alton Towers and Chessington World of Adventures. It was built on the model of the Danish original for £85m and, un-

actually has a theme. Lego bricks are an integral part of most of its attractions. And it goes without saying that Lego is the major theme of the large shop at the exit.

Since last May Mr Clarke has been taking a few days out of every month to visit Britain's leading tourist attractions (nice work if you can get it) and this was the final engagement of his tour. The minister says be's impressed by the amount of research that theme parks put into their attractions. "I think they give a lot of thought to how children react," he said. "It's all very clever and yet very simple. Kids like things that move and things that are exciting. Even

like most of its competitors, it today, on a very cold day, you can look around and see that everyone's very happy."

It's children who are the driving force behind the theme park boom. According to John Wilkes, general secretary of the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions, although parents may want to take their kids to zoos and museums, there's only one place the kids really want to go. "After the age of nine or 10, the children will take the parents where they want to go," says Mr Wilkes. "The figures show a marked movement from zoos to amusement parks at around that age."

But theme parks still have their detractors. Conservation can be an issue at new sites and

local residents are often none too happy at the thought of thousands of cars descending on their country havens. This latter problem is usually countered by developers with an ar-

gament about job creation. Theme parks really are part of the New Britain: service economy jobs, money-spinning leisure, entertainment for a TV generation, something that appeals to every class - well, the children, at least.

The appeal goes right to the top. The royal seal of approval was granted to the theme park experience as far back as 1992, when Diana and ber sons were snapped splashing through Thorpe Park's Loggers Leap. But snobbery remains. In

shell-suited hordes stuffing bot dogs down their mouths. This was perhaps the nightmare vision that prompted Sir Ronald Arculus, chairman of the Kensington Court Residents' Association, to write a stiff letter to The Times regarding plans for a £10m Princess of Wales garden of remembrance at Kensington Palace. "Many people would like to see a small, dignified memorial suited to the historical setting, if it could be sited to enhance and not destroy the amenities of the gardens, which are enjoyed quietly every day by local residents and visitors," he wrote. "Not a theme park, please."

some minds the phrase "theme

park" conjures up a vision of

When the pain of loss grows up with you

EVERY year some 18,000 children under the age of 16 lose a parent, while many others experience the death of a sibling, friend, grandparent or family member. It may happen when you are very young, but the loss lasts a lifetime. The princes William and Harry were the most high-profile youngsters to be included in this statistic last year.

But while helplines abound for the bereaved, there has been no specialist line for children, until today. Cruse, the organisation for the bereaved, has set up such a line for anyone who suffered bereavement in childhood. They expect callers of all ages, including elderly people who have never come to terms with deaths in childhood. Unresolved grief can last much, much longer than we think.

The pattern of loss in early life can be quite distinctive. Children often continue grieving for a lost mother or brother throughout their childhood and into middle age, continually experiencing a new form of loss. The bereavement grows up alongside them, as it were.

"When I'm with my own daughter, who's a teenager and can be rather cruel, I often say she's lucky to have a mother," says Janet Dean, 52, whose mother died when she was six. "It's only as I've got older that I can see how nice it would have been to have had someone there to talk with. Everyone tells me she was a lovely lady."

Since ber mother was only in ber thirties when she died giving birth to Janet's sister, Janet felt very peculiar when she reached an age older than ber mother. She also worries about her son because he is 18, the age her brother died. Once he's 19 she'll feel happier.

Children bereaved of parents can lose their childhood as well. "I'd just started school and I became very inward-looking," says Janet Dean. "I used to stand in the playground with my head towards the wall and I felt very isolated."

Sometimes bereaved children get bullied and teased by other children at school, who are frightened by death, and taunt them. Sometimes they believe, at some unconscious level, that the parent died and left them because they were nanghty. Then they feel incredibly guilty, and hehave badly precisely to bring on the punishment they feel they deserve. And sometimes they become exceptionally good and a "little mother" to the rest of the family for the rest of their

"Things got even worse when my brother died when I was 12," says Janet Dean. "I'd just started secondary school and



Early grief: the princes William and Harry

I was very close to him. He was very good and nice, and he died of a brain tumour. That was much, much worse than my mother. I can remember crying an awful lot on my own in bed because I couldn't bear to worry my father or anyone else in the family. My father had never got over my mother dying and this was more than he could bear. I'd taken on the role of the mother of the family, not practically but psychologically. I would do the worrying; I would oever go to sleep until all my brothers and sisters were in."

If a sibling dies, the remaining children may feel guilty they didn't die instead, or they may become jealous, believing the grieving parent felt the dead child was more special.

Dwaine Steffes, a children's counsellor and training officer for Cruse, and author of When Someone Dies, a book for use in schools, says: "On the whole the attention is given to the spouse, not the child," he says. "The children can feel they are on the sidelines.

"I would certainly recommend they go to the funeral, as long as it's all explained to them in advance - that certain people may cry, that the coffin may be there, that the vicar will say some nice things - and then they are left to make up their own minds whether they want to go. It can be a healing experience because without seeing the coffin they often

imagine the person is still alive, in some magical way." Janet Dean wasn't allowed to go to the funeral of either ber mother or ber brother, and it affected ber enormously. Indeed, until her father died and she went to his funeral she dreamt about ber brother's return every night for nearly 20

"One problem with children is that they often find it difficult to know what death actually means, unless they live on a farm, in which case they have a better idea," says Dwaine Steffes. They often get very confused feelings without knowing why and start becoming depressed and sad. It's very important that their form teacher knows and understands, and that the child is asked whether it wants the fact mentioned and how he or she would like the announcement made. And they must know that at any time at school they can have a private word with their teacher if they feel suddenly unhappy." Cruse Bereavement Care Youth Line: 0181-940 3131.

Virginia Ironside

Middlebrow home of the grooviest tunes around

It's all change at Radio 2. A clutch of star signings are threatening to make it hip. Vanessa Thorpe tunes in

A SUTTABLY velvet revolution is under way at Radio 2. It seems the BBC's most laid-back music station, originally designed for middle-of-the-road smoothies who like their broadcast chat delivered at an easy canter, bas en infiltrated by a peculiarly

mellow brand of fifth columnist. Neil Tennant of The Pet Shop Boys and piano player extraordinaire Jools Holland are to become the Pete Murray, Ken Bruce and John Dunn of the late Nineties.

So is the station that brings you "Sing Something Simple" suddenly hip, or are the bad boys becoming old farts? Another member of the

groovy oew team, comedian conie, feels that it is a question of Radio 2 being repositioned.

"It is because of the way that pop culture has become really fragmented. The people who really love music and spend a lot men such as Jimmy Young and of money on CDs, the people Terry Wogan, do still loom Roy Hudd is still there, Alan Lamarr, the slicked-back standor money on the station's sched- Whicker is still there for God's up comedian who hosts the



and TV film critic Stuart Ma- On the same wavelength: Pete Murray and Jools Holland

from Radio L." he says. Many of the chocolatevoiced old retainers of Radio 2,

talk, have been pushed away ules, but the new spring and summer line-up contains a

sprinkling of subtle surprises. Johnnie Walker is still there, Alan Freeman is still there,

sake, yet further down the list BBCTV game show Never Mind is the name of the until quite recently hyper-hip Neil Tennant. In an unprecedented approach to the sophisticated end of alternative club culture, Radio 2 has asked him to introduce the sent a new rock'n'roll series."It Noel Coward Concert, organised by the Red Hot Aids Charitable Trust to coincide with the centenary of Coward's birth.

Jools Holland, darling of all hardcore musos, is also waiting to leap out at you waving his rhythm stick. A man who knows exactly how take his Mojo apart and put it back together in working order, he is to present

a new show on Mondays. "Fifties throwback" Mark

the Buzzcocks, may also at last have found his middle-brow niche. No longer sneered at and subjected to ridicule by his mates because of his tastes, he is to preis about time we had more than Rock Around The Clock to represent the most exciting era in pop. I am honoured to have

been asked to present it." Maconie thinks that the slower pace of change at Radio 2 is more acceptable to listeners than the way in which its "adolescent" sister, Radio 1, had its schedules altered, "avoiding the sudden revolution under Matthew Bannister that left blood all over the floors," he

INDEPENDENT

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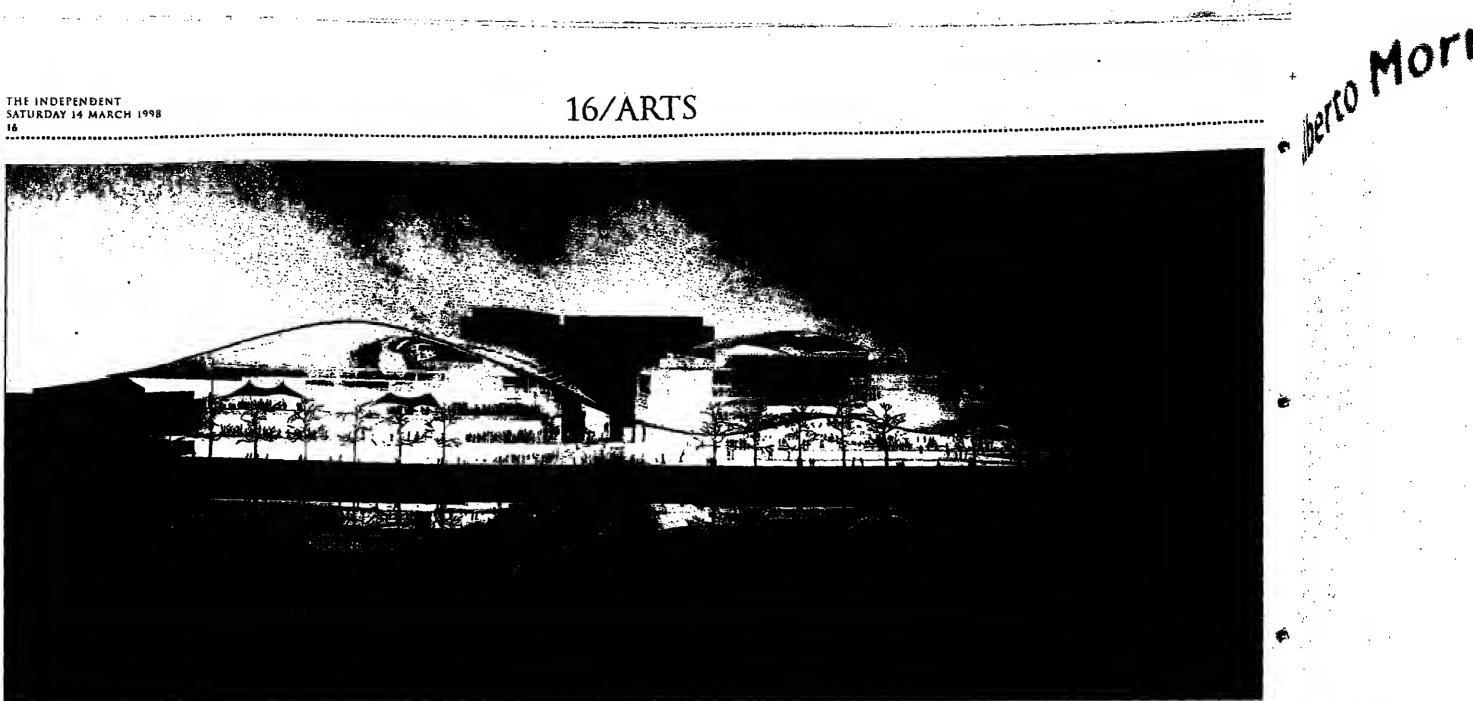
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The grand plan: The design for an undulating glass canopy to cover the South Bank Centre would have been a central feature of London's skyline

We're not on the crest of a wave

Lord Rogers' scheme for the South Bank promised a stunning landmark, says David Lister. Chris Smith must share the blame for the project's demise

THREE years ago this month I accompanied Nicholas Snowman, the chief executive of the South Bank Ceotre, to Paris. He wanted to emphasise coming cultural links between the French and British capitals.

As we returned he waxed lyrical about how Europeans would step off Eurostar at Waterloo and turn the corner to see renovatioo of the Royal Festival Hall, Queeo Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Hall and Hayward Gallery. Indeed, as we stepped off Eurostar there was a beaming Rogers to meet us, showing us how the developmeet would also mean a new Hungerford Bridge linking the two banks of the Thames. lo addition to the striking wavy roof - which would be a landmark feature for London - the alienating, dingy, windswept, concrete walkways would be destroyed; there would be a new street-level cotrance for the Hayward; acoustics in the concert halls would be improved as would fover, cafe and education spaces. And visitors would at last be able to find their way around this appallingly signposted complex.

So much for cultural links between Londoo and Paris, so much for Lord Rogers's enthusiasm, three years of planning, £1 m of lottery money which went into a feasibility study, a promised £17m contributioo from publisher Paul Hamlyn, and the opportunity to give the world's largest arts complex a desperately needed new face. This week the scheme was ditched. The

Arts Council, after months of dithering, said it cannot afford the £75m of lottery money oecessary. But it "approved it in prin-Smith, who rapidly passed it back again. Mr Smith is to meet all the leading players oct week. His officials say he will "bang heads together" to see if something can be rescued from the grand plan. But Mr Smith should got be too shy to put his own head in the circle wheo the banging begins. For he, too, has a share of the blame. The

er arts organisations down on its head.





The shining, I M Per's glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris won worldwide acclaim, while the extraordinary new Guggenheim museum put Bilbao on the map

ciple", whatever that means. It also passed the problem to the Culture Secretary, Chris

scheme was politically too hot to handle. The restructuring of the lottery means the Arts Council has only £200m to spend over the oext six years oo big schemes. To spend nearly half of this in one swoop oo a Londoo venue would, the Council feared, have brought the wrath of the regions and of small-

In theory, the Government could have found part of the money. But it would have

to persuade Parliament of the need for another tranche of lottery money to go to Loodoo after the furores over the Royal Opera House's £78m and, of course, the Millennium Dome's £400m.

And, lest the South Bank Centre should see this as a ringing message of support, it should be stressed that its administrators, too, have contributed to the mess. Dwindling audiences, programming that has drawn criticism, the frequent and embarrassing changes of mind over how many orchestras should be resideot at the halls (and even over the names of the halls themselves). And their first lottery applications did not even meet the criteria. The ceotre does not always inspire confidence. Nicholas Soowman, describing the merits of the Rogers scheme to me recently, remarked how difficult it was to find the front door of the Hayward Gallery. An art lover

from Mars might think it odd that the head

been a brave Culture Secretary who tried of an arts ceotre could tolerate such a situatioo for a decade.

At the Arts Council, staff will tell you in private that part of the reluctance to approve the scheme has been uncase with the present administration. The South Bank chairman Sir Brian Corby stood down this week and I expect Mr Snowman to move oo pretty soon. But be it personality conflicts, differences over music programming and administration policy between an arts organisation and its funding body, or political cowardice, an architectural scheme that would have been a notable addition

to the Loodon skyline has been lost. The undulating canopy would have provided 260 per cent more space for arts and fover activities. And it would have been a landmark to compare with the new Guggenheim in Bilbao or Rogers's own Pompidou Centre in Paris, or even the Louvre

The masterplan was not perfect. Mar-

receive universal approbation. Marcus Binney, a distinguished writer on architecture, describes the wave roof as "po-Pyramid - landmarks that draw you to a city. tentially the most beautiful London dition of the 19th century iron and glass statioo roof, and transforming it into a futuristic saddle shape which will look dramatically different from every angle".

gria Ortese

:Mellor

And complementing the Rogers plan would have been the changes to the Royal Festival Hall by the firm Allies and Morrison. In addition to acoustic improvements, the architects would have restored the original system of circulation and reopened the roof terraces. This (along with improvements to the Hayward) might yet survive the Smith banging of heads.

London will have a new Richard Rogers building - the £750m Dome. It, too, will be an interesting building, but inside it will be a theme pask. Those who visit it are un-likely to go more than once. The glass roof South Bank would have been a cultural meeting point for Londoo and beyond. one would have been a more fitting way to mark the millennium?

Then there is the £78m of lottery money spent on the Royal Opera House. Would the Rogers scheme not have been Society protested: "The Rogers wave roof a better use of lottery arts money? But the opera house got their bid in first and Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, was keen to see it go through quickly, correctly anticipating that there would be a backlash against expensive London projects.

Again, ooe must ask if that amounts to any sort of a strategy - either for the arts, for London, or for the country? Instead of rushing through 'ooe big scheme and allowing the next to gamble oo the prevailing mood, government and Arts Council should have weighed up the merits of the projects they knew were soon to come be-

fore them, and done some prioritising. But that would have demanded a national arts strategy and an overriding concern for the architecture of London. There is little sign of either. And though research shows that 95 per cent of people say the South Bank environment is "appalling and puts them off coming", expect no change.

Laugh? They almost died of shame

Theatre: Surgeon of Honour Southwark Playhouse, London

THE OBSESSION with honour in Spanish Golden Age drama can, to an English sensibility, seem pretty preposterous. All

all that stiff-backed hypersensitivity to real (or imagined) insult. It's a shallow self-respect, we tend to feel, that is so morbidly dependeot on the behaviour of oth-

INDEPENDENT **WIN** Warner Bros.

Musicals range

that banging on about reputation, Falstaff, with his easygoing cynical attitude to honour, would be lucky to have lasted five minutes in such a rigid shame-culture.

> As the recent RSC staging of The Painter of Dishonour proved, however, the plays of Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681) have the power to overcome temperamental differences and make a deep impact here. Why? Partly because of the Baroque bravura with which he conveys the tightness of the no-win trap dictated by the honour code; partly because of the piercing intelligence with which he questions the inhumanity of that code, while blocking off easy es-

> cape routes. Mounted now in a rather patchy but ultimately persuasive production by Judith Roberts at Southwark Playhouse, Calderon's The Surgeon of Honour (1635) heightens ooe's admiratioo for this dramatist. The tortured grisliness of the world it depicts can be summed up in the final tableau. The hideously jealous Count Gutierre (Nigel Parkin) drags in a sodden bed oo which lies the corpse of his wife, whom he has caused to be bled to death by a desperately unwilling doctor

for her alleged infidelity with a former lover. To save both his face and hers, he tries to pass this off as a medical accident.

But John Duvall's icy King decides to turn the tables on this double-standard avenger. Like some weird collision between Othello and Measure for Measure, the play boasts not only an bonour-obsessed wife-murderer, but a dark borse of a ruler (cf the Duke in Measure) and a one-track-minded woman (à la Shakespeare's Mariana) prepared to have the man who dumped ber at any price.

The firsted female, Leonor (Patricia Boyer), is the tricksy means by which the King punishes the horrified Gutierre. A widower now, he is told to marry Leocor. The fact that his hands are literally covered in the blood of his innocent ex-wife isn't exactly a recommendation for his skills as a sensitive husband. But this seems to be an added attraction to Leonor, whose stickling for the honour code verges on pornographic masochism: "If I am sick. Count," she urges, "don't hes-itate to cure me..." and she isn't talking about medicine,

The staging has some laps-



Count Gutierre

es, but makes a strong case for an unsettling play. A refreshingly more flexible approach to honour is provided by a clownservant, Coquin (Christopher McInley), who is given the unenviable ultimatum of making the humourless King laugh or having all his teeth pulled out. A man who is set that task in this unsmiling world had better order some dentures quick. To 4 April. Booking: 0171-620

- Paul Taylor

THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

garet Richardson of the Twentieth Century

rises so high that it will swamp the Festi-

val Hall. Glass is only transparent when lit

internally. For most of the time this will

be perceived as a solid mass interrupting

originally submitted a less expensive

scheme with an overall roof, has said: "I

hated and wished to undo the mega ar-

chitecture which wrapped the Festival

Hall and the whole site in octopus tenta-

cles of the same concrete design." He was

"concerned the Rogers scheme may be per-

ceived as doing the same, enveloping the

But no radical new design is likely to

landmark of the millennium, taking the tra-

whole site in one kind of architecture".

And the architect Terry Farrell, who

important views along the river."

MPs have been getting very exercised about the prospect of their activities being coofined to long wave as part of Radio 4's great schedule changes next month. There is a strong argument that one of the best services a public service broadcaster can perform is to open the actions of our legislators to plain view. Putting parliamentary coverage on long wave, even with extended hours, isn't furthering that aim.

At the same time, you can appreciate the crystalline logic behind the BBC's decision to lump parliament in with Test Match Special and the Morning Service: these are all minority activities apparently intended to give the listener, either through philosophy or sheer duliness, a new per-

spective on eternity. On These Days (last Saturday oo Radio 4) offered a history of parliamentary scandals which made it clear that over the past century or so Parliament has offered colourlessness as a plausible

The production was partly to blame for this, with its shameless adoption of every aural cliché (a brief account of Parnell and Kitty O'Shea was accompanied, bafflingly, by a mawkish dose of Irish folk music) and the usually sparky Matthew Parris oo subdued form.

was a lack of really impressive wrongdoing. Of course, it may be that Parliament has just been particularly good at covering up its own tracks; but listening to Yesterday in Parliament on Friday, you wondered whether the presence of the microphone only makes it more tempting for the public to ignore potential scandal.

Still, the main problem

After a solid five minutes of drab heckies directed at Geoffrey Robinson and his all-singing, all-dancing blind trust, what you feel is not righteous indignation but a weary sense that a quick burst of Morning Service might be just the thing to liven up proceedings. Roll on long wave and bury the whole thing in theo we cao rediscover enough respect for our legislators to worry about what

they get up to.

Meanwhile, buried in the more than deceot obscurity of Radio 3's Sunday evening schedules, a wholesale transfer of the Royal Court production of Conor McPherson's play The Weir. A talkie jumble of inconsequential dialogue and lengthy anecdote, this is in many ways the worst possible play to do on radio. But while the actors did from time to time sink into a deadening staginess, the nuanced depth of their performances allowed an undertone of nagging horfor to pierce the atmosphere. And Ian Rickson managed to enhance the effect with a creative use of radio cliche - the howling wind effect which opened the play was just enough overdone to create a useful sense of chaos barely

At a time when the BBC is becoming notably cowardly about broadcasting plays of any length, The Weir provided a substitute for transparency. decent obscurity for a while; neat vindication of drama

Alberto Morrocco

ALBERTO MORROCCO was dominant influence and, as by far the finest portrait painter travel became easier and he disof his time in Scotland. Portraiture has been problematic for much of the 20th century. but he brought to it his practicality, the straightforwardness of his training, and his own vivid

warmth and directness.

Portraiture is a social husioess. The greatest portrait paioters have always heen genial, open people, putting their sitters at ease, and Morrocco was born to it. One of his finest portraits is of the late Lord Ĉameron, done in 1974. It is a simple, forceful and direct painting, and it seems entirely appropriate that it was dooe in Raeburn's studio. Rachurn too was a genial, charming man.

Portraiture was only part of Morrocco's output. He painted constantly and like Bonnard, who had a significant influence on his work in the 1950s, he painted best what was closest to him: Vera in the kitchen, or in the bedroom arranging her hair, childreo round the table, all painted with a delicate, Impressionist touch. For a while in the Sixties Picasso, Modernism. even abstraction had a place in his art. But his instinct was to as a painter, these qualities celebrate. Braque became a were reflected in his art.

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CLOS

N'S BIGGEST ICAL STORES

covered the land of his ancesmore vivid. Most typical of his later

work are similt scenes beside the sea, or luscious still-lifes bright with the jewelled red of water melons and the sharp yellow of lemons, the background bright and warm. These paintings are often touched with humour, and the composition is simplified to allow his delight in it all to shine through unencumbered, just as his delight in life itself shone through him to illuminate all those lucky enough to know him as a friend.

Alberto Morrocco was a man of great charm: warm, friendly and open, flamboyant even, but only because of an overflow of energy. With an inquiring gaze and a fine Roman nose, his intelligence and humour were immediately striking. As fitted the Scottish son of Italian immigrants, he comhined the best of Scottish directness with Italian warmth, courtesy and generosity of spirit. Throughout his long career

Morrocco, had come to Scotwas actually Mariocco, but the signwriter spelt it Morrocco in letters a foot high on the café front and so it stuck. Alberto himself never thought of it till he had difficulty getting a passport because he did not spell his name as it was written on his hirth certificate. His mother, Celesta Crolla, had come to Scotland as a young

child and so she spoke Scots

and he never really learnt to

speak Italian though he made

several attempts.

At the age of 14 he went from school to Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, by his own account and with typical modesty, not because he was a child prodigy, but because in those days if you wanted to go to college wheo you were 14 "nobody would stop you". At Gray's he came under the influence of James Cowie and Robert Sivell both dedicated to an almost based on drawing. They taught by example and his early work shows how deeply Cowie also worked closely with Sivell

His father, Domenicantonio Aberdeen University Students' Union. He always remained tors, his subject matter became. land as a young man and kept a superb draughtsman. But more exotic and his colour an ice-cream shop. His name he was adventimous too and discovered Picasso for himself; he was even sent out of the classroom for daring to try

Cubism.

land Division, but posted to Edinburgh Castle along with an assorted group who were all, like him, in his own phrase, of "doubtful origin". He spent the war making imitation wounds, painting numbers on helmets and entertaining the troops with on-the-spot caricamres. It nearly led to a music hall career, but the Army would not let him go. Demobbed, he returned to Aberdeen, where he taught part-time till in 1950 he was appointed Head of Painting at Duncan of Jordanstone College

that he held till 1983. If he painted throughout that time with unfailing energy, he was also a great teacher. Renaissance approach to art, And, if in recent years the painting department in the college has made its mark, he laid the foundation. He was unfailinfloenced him, though he ingly professional saw art not as the expression of some

of Art, Dundee. It was a post

vague, unfocused creative urge, but as a practical business that also naturally engaged the human spirit. He carried his staff and stu-

dents along with his enthusiasm and it was typical of him, as one former colleague recalls, that he burst into the class in a sleepy studio one afternoon, declaring, "Let's celebrate. It's Michel-The Second World War saw him enlisted in the 51st Highangelo's birthday!", and carried the whole class off to do just that, ably supported by his wife Vera. In their lovely house overlooking the Tay the hospitality was always warm.

Morrocco exhibited regularly, latterly with ooe-man shows every two or three years, either at the Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh or at the Thackeray Gallery in London. His work is in public and private collections throughout

Duncan Macmillan

Alberto Marrocco (Alberto Morrocco), pointer and teacher: born Aberdeen 14 December 1917; Head of School of Painting, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee 1950-82; ARSA 1952, RSA 1963; RSW 1965; RP 1977; OBE 1993: married 1941 Vera Mercer (two sons, one daughter); died Dundee 10



Morrocco: Scottish directness combined with Italian warmth

Anna Maria Ortese



ANNA MARIA ORTESE was the last great writer of the generatioo that prodoced Italo Calvino and Primo Levi. Today, few critics would disagree with the poet Andrea Zanzotto, who rates her as "one of the most important Italian women writers of this century". That her name rings no bells in the Englishspeaking world reflects more on the priorities of the book trade than on her own, admittedly hermetic, literary genius.

Even in Italy, recognition came late. Ortese's readers were a select band until 1993, when her historical fable II cardillo addolorato was published (this is the only one of her Eighties Adelphi has been works currently available in the UK: it was translated as

for several weeks and ended up selling almost 200,000 copies. Ortese was nearly 80 at the time. This deserved though belat-

ed success was partly due to the Italian reading public's discovery that they had a magic realist in their midst to rank with the best of the Latin American myth-makers. But some of the credit must also go to the vigorous support of the Adelphi publishing house, run by Roberto Calasso, who is best known ootside Italy as the author of The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony (1988). Since the mid-

topped the Italian fiction lists. with an apartment in Milan for fell in with a group of young use as a writer's retreat.

Ortese was born in Rome in

1914 to a working-class family. She grew up with six brothers and sisters between Potenza in the south of Italy and Tripoli in Libya, then part of Mussolini's African possessions, where her father had moved in search of work. It was in Tripoli that she wrote her first collection of stories, Angelici dolori ("Angelic Pains"), influenced by the magic realism of writer Massimo Bontempelli, who also helped persuade Bompiani to publish the book in 1937.

In 1945 Ortese's family moved to Naples, a city which repackaging and reissuing the still bore the scars of the Ger-Ortese back catalogue - in edi- man occupation, with its after- experience, having lived in a loaded syntax has something of The Lament of the Linnet for tions newly revised by the an- math of black marketeering shelter for the homeless for the hauteur of Ginseppe Tomasi

writers centred oo the review Sud, which had an influence far beyond its three-year lifespan.

Ortese's ironic portrait of this literary clique in the epilogue of, ar most famous collection of stories, Il mare non bagna Napoli ("The Sea Does Not Reach Naples", 1953) still had the power to irritate its targets - among whom were Raffaele La Capria and Francesco Rosi-when it was republished These stories were based

partly on Ortese's articles for the weekly news magazine Il Mondo, in which she denounced the conditions of life in the Neapolitan bassifondi; she wrote from and decrerate reverty. Here she more than a year. But she nev-

of disorientation". The oovel L'iguana, first published in 1965, is an example of how Ortese's disenchantment could also spill over into compelling, other-worldly fantasy. The iguana is one of a series of unsettling, magical animals - including the goldfinch (or linnet) of Il cardillo addolorato and the puma of her last novel, Alonso e i visionari ("Alonso" and the Visionaries", 1996) - which Ortese used to deflect her frustration at the limits, and the littleness, of the knowable

er accepted the "neo-realist" la-

oo which to project one's sense

world. Her measured, ironically

bel, seeing the book as "a screen "a gipsy lost in a dream". She shunned the literary salons of post-war Italy, preferring the company of her sister Maria. with whom she lived in Milan (after 1958), in Rome, and finally in Rapallo on the Ligurian coast from 1978 oowards. After Maria's death in 1995 it was her younger brother Francesco who took care of her. Despite a steady stream of

> books - one every three years on average - Ortese never achieved financial independence, and in 1986 she was granted a state writer's pension. Her brief forays mo journalism were limited by a refusal to modulate her writerly voice: Anna Maria Ortese, writer: born d'Italia bicycle race for Panora-

Landolfi. Elio Vittorini, an ear- ma, she wrote that "the Giro ly eothusiast, described her as often sails close to the sweet, unrememberiog shores of

Ortese deserves to be better known in Britain. One hopes that Adelphi's imminent revised edition of her most autohiographical work, La Porta di Toledo ("The Gate of Toledo", first published in 1975) will soon be followed by an English translation. Two other books are available in the US: the novel The Iguana (the best introduction to Ortese's work) and a selection of short stories - the first of two projected volumes - eotitled A Music Behind the Wall.

once, while covering the Giro Rome B June 1914; died Rapallo,

Bernard Mellor

BERNARD MELLOR ooce described the ideal Registrar at a university as "a small bald fellow who walks with a stick". He left out the twinkling eyes and the sharp but friendly

"Buony" Mellor's tenure as Registrar at Hong Kong broke records. Well-informed, cooperative and committed, he was at the centre of the university as it was transformed from a small war-abandooed outpost into a thriving ceotre of learning and life. Everyone in Hong Kong could identify him. Whenever he went back there after his retirement he was in great demand. He knew that he belonged.

wished to be remembered, however, only as a Registrar, least of all as an administrator or a Letters in 1993. manager. Labels do not fit him. He wrote the history of the university (A History of the University of Hong Kong, 1978), which bestowed a doctorate on doctorate that mattered to him.

a doctorate of letters. When he had been at Oxford, his other university, be was editor of Cherwell and employed Edward Heath as a political correspondent. He was taught at Mertoo by the poet Edmund Blunden, who influenced his ways of thinking and feeling. His closest undergrad-

writer Yang Xian-i, who joined him as a Hong Kong Doctor of

It was Yang Xian-i who drew him towards China, a realm of the imagination for him, which always had a place in Mellor's heart. I found it a delight to travhim in 1974, the only kind of el with him there several times over the last 20 years. There was always poetry in the air.

His first prose work bore the memorable title Ration Cooking for Small Detachments. It was written while he was serving as a bombadier in an anti-aircraft unit defending London. In 1942 he was accepted for a commission in the Indian Army and it was from this base (through sig-

Mellor would never have uste friend was the Chinese nals, cryptography and intelli- future Vice-Chancellors. Hong ried a Swiss girl, Mauricette he identified in order to catch gence) that he was posted to Kong's fifth, (Colonel) Lindsay Kunming, very quickly realising his undergraduate dream.

> twined at every stage. For a time he worked as a member of a deception unit headed by Peter Fleming, the China travel writer and brother of Ian. One of their publications was a spurious version of the Illustrated London News, designed for Burma. Mellor's last piece of writing, yet unpublished, covers this adventurous period, a lifetime in itself, and his subsequent arrival in an even more advecturous China.

It was while in Kunming that Mellor met ooe of his in Switzerland he met and mar-

Ride, at that time Professor of Physiology. Ride returned to a devastated Hoog Koog Romance and fact interand a looted university before Mellor: he had to report back

in India before flying to Hong Koog for the first time via Rangooo in October 1945. This was an unforgettable time, like some times since, for all who lived through it in Hong Kong. Yet before settling in Hoog Kong - if "settle" was ever the right word to use in relation to post-war Hong Kong - Mellor returned briefly to Oxford. For different reasons this was

to he a momentous visit. While

Jeanneret-Grosiean, in Berne in

September 1946. They had five

lor's friends there was always a

Fortunately for Bunny Mel-

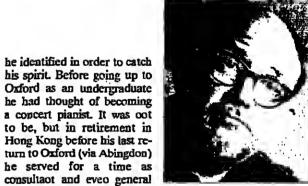
children.

special place for frieodship, and in so-called retirement there were always new things that he found to do. No one could have put more energy into the task of creating an independent university in Macao, an adventure story in itself, the first part of which he has written. No one could have dreamed more vividly not only of new institutions but of oew poems or new films.

There was one other aspect of his experience which must

Oxford as an undergraduate he had thought of becoming a concert pianist. It was oot to be, but in retirement in Hong Kong before his last return to Oxford (via Abingdon) he served for a time as consultant and even general manager to the Hong Koog Philharmonic Society, which was seeking to create a professional orchestra.

Throughout his life Bunny Mellor sought for harmony. and all who shared in it with him will be sad to lose him, performing and cooducting. Silence was oever golden.



Mellor: adventure story

Bernard Mellor, university administrator. born Blackbook Lancashire 8 November 1917; Registrar, University of Hong Kong 1948-74; Planning Director and Consultant, University of East Asia, Macao 1979-88; married 1946 Mauricette Jeanneret-Grosjean (five sons); died Oxford 28 January 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

DEATHS
SEYDOUN: Ziad Rafik, Emeritus
Professor of Geology at the American University of Beirut, died on Friday 6 March 1988, Funeral has taken
nlace in Beirut. Memorial gathering olive in Beirut. Memorial gathering to be announced. Donations to the Professor Ziad Beydoum Memorial Fund (for geological fieldwork), c/o M. Ghoussout, Fait 2, 58 Bassett Road, London W10 6JP.

IN MEMORIAM

REASON: Sean James, died 15 March 1997, aged 27 years, "For we have stripped away the year / With grief and work, and found its heart, / Something with which to persevere. / Something with which to make a start." Mum and

MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marviages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding auriversaries, in Mesneriam) should be sent in writing tent (Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, tolephoned to 917-233 2010 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 66.50 z line (VAT extra)-

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS TONORNOW: The Dules of Edinburgh, French and Chairman of the International French and Chairman of the International States, the Dules of I-dinburgh: Award International Americans, and French, Newvill Board Third, Pepins a with in the United States, the Language House, the Compan Islands, Jonasca, St. Lacie. Dualded and Debugs, thestocks and Bernaude.

Changing of the Guard
Totakn The Househild Carolin Maunted Reg
Totakn The Househild Carolin Maunted Reg
Totakn Househild Carolin Maken Chand
General, 114th, 14 Mattalan, Sickh Chand

Birthdays

TODAY: Prince Albert of Monaco, 40; Sir Kenneth Alexander, former principal, Stirling University, 76; Miss Pam Ayres, poet, 51; Professor Sir Michael Berry, research professor, Bristol University, 57, Mr Ian Bruce MP, 51; Mr Michael Came, accessed. lor, 65; Mr Jasper Carrott, comedi-an, 53; Professor Sir Colin Dollery, former Dean, Royal Postgradume Medical School, 67; Mr Alan Elliott, Medical School, 6; Medical School, 6; Medical School, 6; Cumbria, 56; Lt-Gen Sir Peter Graham, former GOC, Scotland, 61; Sir Philip Holland, former MP, 81; Mr Quincy Jones, bandleader, 65; Sir Gavin Medical School, 61; Medical Laird, chairman, Greater Manches-ter Buses North, 65; Air Chief Marshai Sir Douglas Lowe, 76; Mr John McCallum, actor and producer, 80; Lord Marsh, former chairman, Newspaper Publishers' Association, 70; Sir Eric Norris, former diplomat, 80; Mr Bill Owen, actor, 83; Sir Richard Parsons, former ambassador to Sweden, 70; Dame Betty Paterson, former chairman, North West Thames Health Authority, 82; General Paul Rader, General of the Salvation Army, 64; Miss Tessa Sanderson, javelin thrower, 42, Mr Sanderson, Javenn William Sillery, Headmaster, Belfast Royal Academy, 57; Mr Anthony Smith, President, Magdalon Col-Smith, President, Magnaton College, Oxford, 50; Miss Rita Tushingham, actress, 56; Sh Nicholas Wall, High Court judge, 53, TO-MORROW: Lord Alton of Liverpool, former MP, 48; Mr Alexander Bernstein, former chairman, Grana-

da Group, 63; Dr David Bryer, di-rector, Oxfam, 54; Miss Isobel

Buchanan, soprano, 44; Mr James

Butler, former senior partner, KPMG Peat Marwick, 69, Sir Jack

Callard, former chairman, British

Home Stores, 85; Sir Robert Carn-

wath, High Court judge, 53, Lord Constantine of Stanmore, former company chairman, 88; Mr Ry Cood-

er, folk and blues guitarist, 52; Mr Frank Dobson MP, Secretary of State for Health, 58; Professor Sir James Dumber-Nasmith, architect, 71; Mr John Duttine, actor, 50; The op of Coventry, 81; Professor John Right Rev John Gibbs, former Bish-Gillingham, neurosurgeon, 82; Earl Haig, painter, 80; Sir Leonard Knowles, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas, 82; Mr Mike Love, vocal-ist, 54; Admiral Sir Raymood Lygo, former chief executive, British Aerospace, 74; Mr Keith McCarter, sculp-tor, 62; Professor Joan Mitchell, political economist, 78; Mr Michael Moore, chairman, Quicks Group, 62; Mr Robert Nye, novelist and poet, 59; Mr Ben Olori, author, 39; Sir Philip Powell, architect, 77; The Right Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Win-chester, 55; Mr Gavin Stamp, historian and writer, 50; Sir Roger Tomkys, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, 61; Mr David Wall, former Director, Royal Academy of Dancing, 52.

TODAY: Births: Mrs Isabella Mary Beeton (Mayson), author of bousehold and cookery books, 1836; Albert Einstein, physicist, 1879. Deaths: Karl Marx, political philosopher, 1883, Busby Berkeley (William Berkeley Enos), choreographer, 1976. Today is the Feast Day of St Eutychius or Eustathius of Carrhae St Leobinus or Lubin and St Matilda. TOMORROW: Births: Lady (Isda. 10 Tronsover Burns: Lany (Bestella Augusta) Gregory (Persse), playwright and a founder of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 1852. Deaths: Aristotle Onassis, Greek ship-owner, 1975; Damo Rebecca West (Cocky Isobel Fairfield), author, 1868. 1983. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Clement Mary Hofbauer, St Longinus, St Louise de Marillec, St Lu-cretia or Leocritia, St Matrona and St Zachary, pope.

FAITH & REASON

Who wins on the Di Wheel of Fortune?

What do we learn about ourselves from scratch cards bearing the name of Diana, Princess of Wales? asks Paul Handley, Editor of the Church Times

I want to buy a casino. I'd like to name it the Princess Diana Wheel of Fortune. You want to play roulette? Place your Di-tokens here and som the wheel. I'm not in this for myself, you understand: 20p in every pound will go to charity. I shall apply to the Princess Diana Memorial Fund for permission to use her name. And I'll get it.

Last week I had just finished a leader Princess pure (though I questioned this business of trademarking the Princess's image). Walking past a newsagent the scratch-card. I went in and bought one. peace. It was true:

The monies generated for the fund by this lottery will go to the charities and charitable causPrompter: Michael Gibbins, Kensington who will benefit from the first pay-outs from the fund, announced last Monday.

It lies on my desk as I write this. It might be squeamishness, but I can't bring myself to scratch it. What if I win the £25,000? We could use a new bathroom downstairs. The Di loo, perhaps? More likely, my usual tuck will prevail: Di, you've let me down.

In what conceivable way does this scratch-card preserve the Princess's good name? People buy lottery cards and tickets because they want to gamhle, or, more accurately, win; if they wanted to give to charity they would give. So it's a deal that's being offered hy the fund: you support Diana's favourite charities and we'll give you the chance to win £25,000. Wheo she was alive, the Princess of Wales was oot insusceptible to the deals required by for my own paper praising the fund for fame and fortune. She danced at charits efforts to keep the name of the ity galas in the US; she had her photograph taken with landmine victims. But such a scheme as this would not have been countenanced by even the following morning, I spotted a poster Duchess of York. In death the Princess in the window for the Diana lottery ought to have been allowed to rest in

The moral high ground on this issue is, admittedly, not very high, and those who attempt to stand there find es which were close to the Palocesa's heart... it pretty swampy. The leprosy sufferers when they give to me. First, they seldom give

won't care particularly how the money was raised. And there is little to choose between the different forms of gambling, from village-fete raffles to City investments. Church leaders, in the main, declined to criticise the National Lottery when it was taunched, and besides, the days wheo the Church might have kept itself untainted are long gone. Even those churches which abjure gambling for money have somehow to explain away a faith that seems to offer a similar sort of deal: "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." As a result, the gospel of pros-

from the fund, announced last Monday,

around the world, most particularly in South America and parts of Africa. The most recent example to come my way was a set of photocopied pages from Miracle Money, an American Pentecostalist tract, "John", the author, was visited one night by a disconsolate

perity has takeo hold in many places

Jesus: "John, I usually cannot multiply back to my children the money they give me." I asked, "Wby not, Lord? Your Word says

"My children usually make two mistakes

the exact amount I tell them to give. . . Second, they usually give without expecting any-thing specific back in return. John, the multiplication of money back to the giver is a miracle, and my miracles operate by faith. When my people give without expecting anything back, they have not given in faith." Like all heretical nonsense, this ap-

proaches the truth theo distorts it grotesquely. Yes, there are demands for payment in most of the world faiths, in the currency of prayer, devotioo, and alms-giving (and support of the priesthood); and there are offers of a reward, in terms not only of eternal life but often some sort of help and support in this world. But the idea of our doing a deal with God is illusory: in a relationship with an almighty creator, we can only receive. The divine call, though, is not to passive acceptance but to partnership. As a consequence, Christians use this seasoo of Lent to reflect on how they can emulate God's complete and unconditional giving of himself on the cross.

But sacrifice, one suspects, is a concept "John" is unfamiliar with. This is where the Memorial Fund has got it so wroog. Princess Diana's memory should inspire us to acts of selfless generosity, not grasping transactions nmoog the cheap sweets and the cigarettes.

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Drop the humbug about hunting

"DADDY, do most people think fox-huoting should be banned?" Yes, dear, according to a Gallup poll this mooth two-thirds of grown-ups in Britain think it should be. "And do most Members of Parliameot think hunting should be banced?" Yes, dear, last November they voted by 411 to 151 to ban it. "Oh, good, so it is against the law now, then." Well, not exactly; you see, there are some even more important people, called the Cabinet... "And they doo't think hunting should be banned?" Er, it's a bit more complicated than that: 18 of them say it should be hanned and two say it shouldn't. "Oh, don't they say what they mean, theo?" Not

"Daddy, is Tony Blair in the Cahinet?" Yes, he is the most important one. "And what does he think?" Well, a girl of about your age wrote a letter to ask him, and he wrote back saying, "I do think hunting is wrong and I will vote in favour of a han in the House of Commons." "But that doesn't mean what I think it means, does it?" No, I'm afraid oot, dear.

Let us translate the Prime Minister's words into plain English for his 11-year-old correspondent, Roseanne Mills: "I do think hunting is wrong, but not so wrong that I want to pass a law against it, and I will vote in favour of a bao in the House of Commons, so long as it is a purely symbolic gesture." Thus amplified, Mr Blair's position suddenly becomes a perfectly reasonable one. So what is going on here? At one level, he is making a cold political analysis about the sorts of issues which can sway floating voters in all the rural and semi-rural seats which Labour won for the first time last May.

One reason for the double-talk is that he does not want to admit that he and the Cabinet care more about the strong views of Barbour-jackcted Middle Eogland than the weak views of the majority, with the rights of foxes coming a rather distant third.

Another reason why the Prime Minister is reluctant to level with Ms Mills and the rest of us is that he does not want to undermine the charade of representative democracy which assumes that we send our MPs to Westminster to exercise their judgement on our behalf. The issue of fox-hunting has been presented as a "free vote", a matter of tender consciences and open government, but the truth is that a free vote of the legislature stands only by permission of the executive. This is a tricky one for a Labour Party which inveighed against the dictatorship of the executive over the legislature in the Thatcher era, when all manner of measures were railroaded through that would not have been supported in, say, a secret ballot.

It turns out, then, that all the fine talk about free votes is cover for hard-nosed calculation of party political advantage. But where Mr Blair has lost the plot is in thinking that the voters would object if he spelt out what is really going on. The Government's position has now become so double-dealing and demeaning that it is doing more damage than if the Prime Minister simply told the animal rights movement he disagreed with them. Having raised expectations among the pro-fox legions and thoroughly confused his own backbenchers, the Home Secretary this week declared: "I do not see a role for Government. We do not have a mandate for it." These are, to stay with the world of wild mammals for a moment, weasel words.

Jack Straw is pedantically right: the Labour Party has no formal mandate in the sense that its manifesto promised only a free vote. But that



iust takes us back to the previous layer of double-talk. How much more of a mandate does the Government really oeed than public opinion, a vote of the Commons and the publicly-expressed personal views of its own members?

Because the Government has not been straight with people, yesterday's fizzling-out of Michael Foster's Bill is not and cannot be the end of the matter. The pro-hunters still feel threatened, and the pro-fox lobby still have their righteous tails up.

It is time for Mr Blair to make some tough choices, say what he means and mean what he says, and trade some short-term popularity for longterm credibility. He should say that he does not like fox-hunting. It is objectionable that people should take pleasure from the tearing apart of one animal by another, and some of the subsidiary practices such as the "hlooding" of children are little short of barbaric.

But he - or whoever drafted that letter to Ms Mills - should avoid describing fox-hunting as "wrong": as one with a strong ethical basis to his politics, such language gets him into difficult territory. Why will he vote (albeit ineffectively) to outlaw hunting? If adultery is wrong, should it be legislated against? If abortion is wrong, should it be illegal? On the next countryside march, expect to see placards proclaiming "A huntsman's right to choose". And if hunting is "wrong", how much more or less wrong is the greater daily brutality of abattoirs and intensive farming?

The important point is that it should be possible to disapprove of things without trying to have them banned. If our first response to things we do not like is to seek to ban them, we will soon find ourselves living in an illiberal society, and we will have failed to reach a mature understanding of representative democracy.

So the House of Commons came to the right conclusion vesterday. by in effect declining to criminalise one particular method of the necessary culling of foxes. But it would have been better if the Government had been prepared to talk about the oeed to balance conflicting priorities and to protect minority views in a democracy.

Instead of hiding behind pious sentiments, while justifying their contrary actions to themselves as cold political necessity, it would help if politicians were prepared to give us the real reasons why Mr Foster's Bill died yesterday. They should not be afraid to make the argument in public about the need to balance conflicting imperatives and to protect minority views from the tyranny of democracy. Even an 11-year-old could



High on the hog: Two-month-old Tamworth/Berleshire cross weaners on a farm in Essex

BBC and Parliament

YOU REPORTED (27 February)

that, following a confrontation between the chairman of the BBC and

Gerald Kaufman MP, Sir Ch. stopher

Bland has written to make clear that

This claim highlights a convenient

should be "independent"; the ques-

Government, certainly. Independent

of the sovereignty of Parliament, of

the Royal Charter and Agreement

(themselves expressing Parliament's

will), of the national interest or of the

A Select Committee is not the

Government. It is an all-party affair,

representative of all strands of the

House of Commons. It is not just one

of the vital organs of our society,

alongside broadcasting; it is part of

the sovereign organ. For a healthy

and civilised democracy, those vital

organs must have respect for each

other's functions and not -- as broad-

casting seems increasing to do -- con-

tinually try to trump, upstage,

hrowbeat or outsmart one another.

The increasing neglect of parlia-

mentary proceedings by the media,

when they are not actively pouring

scorn on them, is neglect and scorn

citizen licence-payer, surely not.

Photograph: Brian Harris A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171-293-2534

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

he has no intention of complying with the wishes of the Select Committee to the overall anatomy of the society of which they are part whether on Culture, Media and Sport that he delay implementation of the BBC's they like it or not. Any organisation embarking on that route is well on plans to change its coverage of Parliament until the committee has the way to becoming an overmighty subject, which carries the seeds of its published its own report next month. You quote Sir Christopher as sayown rapid destruction, as the last ing he believes such an undertaking overnighty subject, the trades unions, found not so very long ago. would seriously compromise the independence of the BBC Governors.

I do urge Sir Christopher to think again and delay the BBC's plans only intellectual smokescreen that has until next month, thereby demonarisen over the corporation's duties strating the corporation's overriding versal agreement that the BBC serves, rather than the heady machismo of its own self-importance. tion is - independent of what? Of day- IAN CURTEIS

to-day editorial interference by the Somerford Keynes, Gloucestershire

Border disputes

THE "new world order" seems to rest on a dogma never openly proclaimed - that borders must never be changed, even if the states defined by them have proved unviable. Thus condemnation of the Serb use of force is followed by a request in Parliament for an assurance that the Government will not support independence for Kosovo, or its union with Albania. Robin Cook offers instant assurance: There is no map for a greater Croatia, a greater Serbia, or a greater Albania."

In other words, the Kosovo Alhanians, like the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia, must for ever remain part of a state they detest. There must be an "end to violence" and a "negotiated settlement".

poured oo our unique and precious The policy of all borders being exform of democracy itself. Sir Christopher's defiance of the select Committee is a prime examples of the belief of far too many methe case of Yugoslavia, since the borders concerned were those of dia people that they somebow lead, or should develo, agenda separate provinces, not independent states. .

I believe this policy rests principally on the experience of the 1938 Munich agreement, where borders were redrawn in order to prevent war, and this did not prevent war. For being modern, we appear to be going into the oext century with a foreign policy stance conditioned by the experience of the Second World

over Iraq showed. Those people denied self-detertowards Parliament. There is uni-interest in the health of the nation it mination in the post-war settlements will not go away. Neither repression nor negotiation solves ethnic problems; they are solved only by moving populations or changing borders. Since the latter is obviously the more humane, why must it never even be discussed?

JOHN EDMONDSON Glastonbury, Somerset

Blair in church

THE CAPTION to your picture of the Prime Minister at church during the Labour Party Conference (4 March) is incorrect. The service was not a Catholie Mass, but an Anglican Eucharist celebrated in Brighton Parish Church by the Bishop of Chichester (who also appears in your picture greeting Mrs Blair). The Prime Minister is pictured in conversation with the Roman Catholie Bishop of Arundel and Brighton who had been invited to

The occasion aptly illustrates the ternally sacred is an artificial and Prime Minister's ecumenical outlook, doomed attempt to freeze the course as well as the convergence of the of history. It is particularly absurd in churches, rather than any "turning to Rome".

Canon PETER ATKINSON Chichester, West Sussex

preach at the service.

Philip's memorial

YOUR "In the News" article on Prince Philip (9 March) commented: "It is unlikely he will ever have all this government's obsession with a memorial named after him." He already has - the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

For many years I have worked in it as a group leader, and on several pany of young people from all backgrounds he was attentive, cheerful and remarkably well informed. ...

If there were a choice between the Albert Memorial and the thousands of young people who have enjoyed the programme of achievement and adventure, I know which the Duke of Edinburgh would happily choose. The Rev J CLIVE TOUGHER Ashbourne, Derbyshire

Indeed, sir?

I TRUST that the newly affluent Independent can afford for its library a book starring the inimitable Jeeves. so that your staff may be reminded that he was not a botler, but a gentleman's personal gentleman. It is indeed time you moved upmarket, as YOUR NEW proprietorial arrangepromised, in the light of your report "School to teach Jeeves a lesson" (12 March). Jeeves buttled only once in a Wodehouse moon, to help out his butler uncle Charlie Silversmith. MURRAY HEDGCOCK

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) London SW14

IN YOUR leading article "Buttling for Britain" (12 March) you state: "Britain buttles better". Of course

PAULBUTTLE Keswick, Cumbria

Modern Latin

PICTURE OF THE DAY

HENRY WICKENS (letter, 11 March) rather overstates his case in arguing that the Greeks and other Orthodox nations would object to the idea of Latin becoming the lingua franca of the European Union.

Latin was, for several centuries affer the foundation of Constantinople, the administrative language of the Roman Empire (both East and West). It is true that modern Greek owes (some of) its origins to classical Greek, in the same way that French, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian have their roots in Latin; but, unlike classical Greek, War, as the recent spate of rhetoric occasions have had the pleasure of Latin is actually still a spoken lanmeeting Prince Philip. In the com- guage, therefore serviceable for modern -day administrative idiom:

It is also true that the Bulgars speak a variant of the Slavonic language, but the Romanians have a language which is closer to Latin, as their very name suggests, than any west European language.

As to the argument from religion, the Germans might well protest at their language not being recognised as an internal language of the Commission on the grounds that German was the language of the Reformation. But then as we all learnt from our great uncles, God is an Englishman! JOHN F CRAWFORD Thurlestone, Devon

Age no bar

ment seems promising. Lots of luck. I am disconcerted to learn, bowever, that you plan to appeal to "a young professional, high-income, educated readership" (report, 12 March) Will there be no appeal to middle-aged - even old - "high-income, educated, etc"? Not only are we, too, "truly looking for an independent viewpoint", some of us have more money than some of them. STEWART RUSSELL Landon SE10

[We mean "young in spirit" - Eds]

LETTER from THE EDITOR

IT'S BEEN a great week for The Independent and instant uncomplicated tax relief. Here, we're commerce, sociability and ultimately for com-The Independent on Sunday. On Wednesday, our two titles were bought by Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers Group. We are now guaranteed strong financial security, and we have an exhilarating brief to take the papers to the top of the market, to make them the best most intelligent reads around. Andrew Marr, who returned this week to the papers after a short absence, and I will be working towards this end together. Our pertnership has raised more than a few cynical eyebrows this week, but I'm delighted at the prospect of working with Andy. As he said yesterday, we're two very different people, with different histories and prejudices and talents. But newspapers are big places and they need as much input as possible. From this week, The Independent has become a much more open and lateral-thinking organisation. It is immensely exciting to be part of it.

ON THURSDAY night, we took our campaign for tax relief on arts funding to the Royal Academy, where Melvyn Bragg chaired a debate on the pros and cons of adopting the long-established American system of arts support. There it is simple. Make a donation to your local theatre, the Metropoli-

our arts are suffering - in crisis, many would say. But the arts should never be underestimated. As Jude Kelly, director of the west Yorkshire Playhouse, put it: "The Government simply doesn't understand how the arts can change lives. There was once a time when it was embarrassing to think that reading and writing - or women's rights - were essential parts of humanising and enhancing a society. No longer true. Now the arts need to be looked at in this way - they're as vital to well being as health, education and sewerage."

THEY'RE ALSO vital to communities. I grew up in Ludlow, Shropshire, and every year they perform Shakespeare inside the castle walls. The first play I attended was Macheth - marvellous at night. with the floodlit grey stone walls providing a backdrop to the stage set. Milton's Comus was first staged in Ludlow Castle, so the organisers were. inheriting a long tradition. Over the years, the festival has become the high point of the town's year. The Shakespeare production is now just a part of a fortnight-long celebration of all forms of art ted we've won. - painting, jazz, dance, pottery, book readings. tan museum, or a poetry society and you can claim Almost the entire town is involved. It is good for

bound up in interminable red tape and as a result munity. Mark Fisher, Minister for the Arts, was present at our debate on Thursday and he warned us that we were in for "a very long campaign". I guess that spells gloomy news for us in next Tuesday's budget, but he did add that he welcomed campaigns like ours as they raised the profile of this important issue and, ultimately, would help keep the arts vital. So, to all our readers who have written in with their support, a very big thank you. We're not giving up the fight yet.

FINALLY, this week saw International Women's day. I barely noticed it this year, unlike in 1971, when 5.000 demonstrated for equal pay rights, childcare facilities, contraception and abortion. Nowadays, we don't seem to know what IWD is -or should be - about. I find this somewhat sad. but it is probably inevitable. Women have made enormous strides in the past 25 years. Maybe it is now time to let other more needy groups take over these endless "days". After all, if National Impotence day now shares its 24-hour slot with Valentine's Day, then maybe its time we admit-

ROSIE BOYCOTT

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I think it's better if she stays in the House of Commons, don't you? At least it keeps her off the stage" - Miriam Margolyes, actress, on Glenda Jackson, now a transport minister.

"I prefer mashed potato to exercise. So I have -- how you say it? - muscles like mashed potatoes" - jean-Paul Gaultier, fashion designer.

"I am not sure if I am ironically post-modern or post-modern ironical" --Terry Wogan, broodcaster.

"We are a young, vibrant, modern and forward-looking organisation made up of people with vision and energy. We are not old duffers" -Tim Lamb, chief executive of the English Cricket Board.





DAVID **AARONOVITCH**

There are so many ways to prepare to meet our doom, but one scares me more than all the others ...

"WELL" I thought to myself yesterday afternoon, "I know what I was planning to do nn Thursday, 26 October, 2028. Very roughly. I was thinking of spending the day at bome in Il Campanibile - nur rosewashed farm-house oear Siena - proofreading the pages of my magnum opus, A Time Of Giants: Marr and Boycott at Canary Wharf and resting. In the late autumnal afternoon (say, roundabout 5.30), I would have just awoken from my oap, taken my age retardants and been preparing for a bout of enhanced lovemaking with my bormonally-replaced partner, before doing my statutory 30 lengths of the

"But oow," my thought continued, "I probably won't be able to do any of those things, because - at precisely that time some bloody great hump of space rock is due to punch a hole in the atmosphere and crash into the earth, extinguishing much life and putting a substantial deut in the Marr-Boycott market."

This uncomfortable cogitation had, of course, been set off by authoritative reports from a body called the International Astronomical Union, that a large asteroid (fireball XF11) was definitely on course to pass within a few thousand miles of the earth. In space terms that is very close (actually in Earth terms it's pretty close too; Aberdeen often seems further away than that).

Now, it was something similar - except four times larger - that landed on the Yucatan peninsula sometime in the Cretaceous period, and left us with only crocodiles, rhinos and the Countryside Alliance to remind us of the time when dinosaurs ruled the earth. XF11, if it were to hit us, would kill between a quarter and a half of the world's population, we were told, and leave large parts of the earth uninhabitable.

As I digested the need to alter my Ital-

included – even the outcasts ian plans in the light of this oew information, nther thoughts began to crowd into my already cluttered head. The first thing I realised was that - contrary to my earli-

er belief - the powers that be would not be able to suppress all knowledge of impending doom while they prepared special hunkers for themselves on Mars. Some bloody attention-seeking astrono-

Then I began to wonder what the effect of this certain knowledge was going to be on my fellow citizens. In the first

seconds after hearing the story of XF11 nearly everyone I knew calculated exactly how old they'd be at the moment of im-

pact. Those whn would still be under 60 felt very gloomy indeed, almost cheated in

fact. It was hard to escape a sense of being envied for already having made it tn

Then there was the difficulty in dealing

with everyday issues and transactions that were likely to be transformed. Pensions and mortgages, with their finite payment periods now likely to be curtailed, were

the most obvious. But what was going to

it be easier or harder to sell up and

happen to house prices generally? Would

And anyway, didn't much of this de-

pend on exactly where the asteroid struck

us? If New Zealand or the Pacific looked

like being the landing site for XF11, then

we Britishers might well survive, albeit in

the perpetual gloom of a dust cloud (re-

member, loads of Californians get by in

LA). If, however, it looked like Birming-

ham was going to be the epicentre of an

to decide whether to stay or to go. The

odious Monday Club would hopefully be

faced with busineds of Anglo-Caribbeans,

suddenly anxious to take them up on their

Many vexed policy discussions would

simply cease. There wouldn't seem to be

summit: no-one would worry much about

would become redundant because every-

body would smoke. The birth rate would

fall dramatically and fifteen years later -

On the plus side many more young

women might be willing to sleep with old-

er men who will be using the (now) more

convincing "tomorrow we die" pretext. If

fin-de-siècle prompts interestingly de-

bauched behaviour, just think what de-

lights fin-du-monde might not lead tol

ally robust fellow humans will join the

growing ranks of vindicated Millennari-

ans, seeking salvation through the drink-

ing of urine, the eating of scorpions and

deities from Budleigh Salterton. They will

want to convert all of us and it will make

This last prospect alone - I thought -

should be enough to prompt an interna-

from its present course. Surely a probe -

American smart bomb, piloted by a mem-

ber of the RAF, guided by Microsoft, de-

organised by Peter Mandelson - could be

launched at some point in the next thirty

years, and three decades of tedious evan-

ally, XF11 was coming nowhere near us.

And then Nasa ammmeed that, actu-

tional effort aimed at diverting XF11

funded by the lottery, containing an

signed by Alexander McQueen and

gelism averted?

We had been spared.

arguing with a whole sect of Trotskyists

the worshipping of little pony-tailed

seem like a summer holiday.

But alas, every impacting asteroid has its downside. Many of our less intellectu-

as a result - so would the incidence of

much point in holding another Earth

global warming. Tobacco advertising

kind offer of funded repatriation.

impending collision, then one would have

mist would be sure to blab.

TREVOR PHILLIPS

New Labour has found a way to cast its net over just about everyone. And why not?

IT HAD to come. This Government is so damned inclusive that it would only be a matter nf time before it was caught locked in embrace with some of Labour's traditional enemies. The first signs came with the rash of business appointments to government jnbs - Lord Simons, for example. Then Sports Minister Tony Banks brought in his old Tory sparring partner David Mellor to speak up for football fans. Those who stalk the corridors of Downing Street and Millbank tell me that you can hardly go for a pee without running into Liberal Democrats taking a break from the latest joint committee nn constitutional reform. Ministers even turned up on the Countryside March, which was called to lambast the Government for letting down rural voters. And the Prime Minister has generonsly donated some of his old speeches and ideas to the Leader of the Opposition for use in foreign parts.

Now ministers are drawing the consumers of public services into their embrace. It will not endear them to the professional middle classes, whose ardour for New Labour is cooling faster than that of a dog doused in a bucket of cold water. The sight of Health Secretary Frank Dobson's porters on Health Authorities, will put the wind up the consultants. Those in the high arts are increasingly irritated by the Government's love affair with the visigoths from the design, fashion and music in-

dustries. But it is Education Secretary David Blankett who is perhaps breaching the most profound taboo. He is backing efforts to ask children their opinions about their schools. This should send a shudder through the teaching profession. It is not a tightly-controlled New Labour exercise in which a few budding Tony Blairs are asked to read their best essay about "My School" to their adoring parents and indulgent teachers; this is something else

a most unexpected source of keeper. The police now use new and innovative ideas: two "former" burglars to advise on

In Blair's Britain, everyone is

The public sector uninn Unison and its partner the National Association of Social Workers in Education bave published a survey showing that up to half a million pupils a day are involved in truancy, and some 80,000 hardly ever turn up to classes at all. The police say that these are the kids who then do drugs and petty crime, and cause serious headaches all round. I will leave aside the question of what their parents are doing whilst all this is going oo and concentrate nn what the schools might do. Almost every effort has been unsuccessful sin bins, punishmeets of various kinds, exclusion. So where should we look for new an-

trades unions.

The unions have done the the problem. They have set up children's panels made up of persistent truants to talk about what would bring them back to the classroom. Inevitably, at their first meetings, the children emphasized their boredom in class. Mare interestingly bowever, they pointed tn favouritism by teachers, and claimed that a later start to the

recognition nn both fronts. Who knows where the exercise will go? But you do not have to embrace the whole Blairite project to grasp the valaltogether, and it comes from ue of the poacher turned game-

thundered Henry Miller in

Tropic of Cancer (that 20th-

school day might he more

palatable. Anybody who can

remember their own teenage

years will give a silent nod of

their efforts in crime preventinn; nne such told me a couple of years ago that be was making a better living showing the police his methods than elambering through windows.Others have traded in their burglars' balaclavas for contracts with motor manu-

facturers and insurance companies desperate to find ways

of reducing the natioo's soaring autocrime figures. The children's panels show

contribute to solutions bave to with a special brief to ensure obvious thing - which some- be reformed at all? Might we that we get value for money? times is the right thing: they are not learn more from the unre- And shouldn't the Chancellor current Test the West Indies asking the culprits to advise on constructed wicked? After all, be actively searching out Mr put our team oo the rack yet ing the works of Lucifer. For example, I wonder what the Equal Opportunities Com-

Ken Livingstone for the Treasury team, perhaps to help the Paymaster-General in his work in devising a fairer tax regime? This would be inclusiveness on Perhaps this is all a little too imaginative. If so, we could be-

gin slowly, and simply start to think of opening some new political dialogues. There are still relatively few places where people from different parts of

the political spectrum can talk to each other withnut the need to draw imaginary lines between themselves. This makes politics petty and dull; it also obscures the real divisions in our society - between urban and rural, between young and old, between secular and religinus. I doubt if we need any oew think tanks or forums; but we certainly need those that exist in begin to engage more with their traditional enemies. A modern pobtical society cannot afford a dialogue of the deaf. We will know something is stirring when the rightist intellectual David Willetts is asked to serve on the board of a leftleaning think tank, or Peter Lilley addresses a TUC economic

One example of a poacher turned gamekeeper who has brought home the bacon is on display in the Caribbean. where on the first day to the again. Several of the England party could have qualified to play for the West Indies by virtue of having Caribbeao parents. With a bumiliating first innings looming, it was Mark Ramprakash, the Middlesex captain, and a Lnndoner of Guyanese extraction. who came to the rescue with yet another outstanding performance. Thank God he's no our side, not theirs.



Two truants take a break from advising the Government's social exclusion unit

Germaine Greer tn be ap-

pointed to the Chair of the Eng-

possibilities seem endless. Per-

haps when Rohm Cook is pon-

dering his next appointment to

the European Commission,

Teresa Gorman, who seems

unnaturally quiet at present,

should be given something use-

ful tn do in Brussels. Lord

Irvine is building a reputation

as a man who knows a thing or

two about extravagant spend-

ing on the public purse; might

In the political sphere the

lish Cricket Board today.

Photograph: Rui Xavier

Might we not have a lot to learn from the unreconstructed wicked?

us how we might go even fur- the next reshuffle take him to ther. Why should those who the Social Security department even priests spend time study-

mission would make of the appointment of Peter Stringfellow, wbn probably knows mnre about sexism than any nther Briton alive. Might the Commission for Racial Equality benefit from the advice of National Front veterans like John Bean? Would Jo Brand - smoker and drinker - be the right sort of medicine for a Health Authority? It is certainly time that Kelvin Mackenzie, the guru of mndern tablnid jnurnalism found his way on to the Press Complaints Commission; and I would personally campaign for

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Coca-Cola, Jane Austen – just what makes a classic?



BOYD TONKIN

Does Michael Foot's just republished 'Guilty Men' have the marks to enter the canon of Great Books?

MICHAEL FOOT never made it into Number 10, but this summer the former Labour leader will gain an honnur that might please him even more. He becomes a Classic. Guilty Men, the scorching anti-appeasement polemic that Foot co-authored in 1940 under the jnint pseudonym of "Cato", will appear in the Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics list. Does he deserve to share n catalogue with the likes of Proust, Kafka and Woolf. And if not, why not? Canon-making and canon-

changing preoccupies our archive-minded pre-millennial time. Far from drowning in a sea of anything-goes relativism, as the doomsters claim, we draw up lists, compile charts and nosessively play at Ins and Outs. Last year, the customers of Waterstone's caused a seismic shock amnng the literati when they dared to place Tolkien's Lord of the Rings at the top of the chain's Books of the Century poll.

At the time, the fuss merely amused me. Then the film and music magazines got in on the game. First it emerged that today's amnesiac cine-buffs imagine that the art began with Star Wars and probably think that Fellini is a sexual practice. Then the airhead readers of the rock press duly chose the likes of Radiohead and the Verve ahead of Hendrix, Dylan or the Stones. I began to sympathise

with Disgusted of Tunbridge wizards (as in "Classic Coke")

but they also make money. This month, Oxford World's Classics resurface in a stylish new format, 90 years after Oxford University Press first acquired the brand frnm an entreprenuer whn (like all classics publishers) dreamed of the pots of gold that lurk in noncopyright material with a firm niche on the syllabus. These

simply means the old stuff they want to go on selling anyway. Some recent bids to revise the canon do have an air of special pleading (and carny marketing) about them. When Virago's Carmen Callil bought the old plates of forgntten novels by women authors and clad them in deep green as Modern Classics, she did resurrect a few neglected geniuses, such as Antonia White. Others were days, they can also hope to nf- just period-pieces brought back

> Every man with a bellyful of classics is an enemy to the human race'

screenwriters. As the Hollywood joke put it when Gwyneth Paltrow starred in Jane Austen's Emma: they've made a period re-make of Chieless.

Meanwhile, David Campbell of Everyman's Library has just picked up more than £4m of Lottery cash to help him put a set of his titles in every state school. "Literature is news that stays news," trumpeted Ezra Pound. It also stays in profit.

So art-objects called "classics" proliferate, but does the concept's popularity just devalue its meaning? After all, the term when used by marketing an enemy to the human race," novel High Fidelity shrewdly

fer works with ready-cooked ap- into circulation by a social peal for TV and movie movement that caught the jetsam nf past fashions in its slip-

> At the other extreme, TS Eliot famously denied that English literature has any classics at all. Writing in 1944, he judged Shakespeare by the "universal" standards of Virgil and Dante, and labelled him a mere provincial maverick. Eliot anchors the idea of a classic firmly to the lofty heritage of Greece and Rome and the imperial cultures that emplated them. And that, of course, is why many people distrast the notion. "Every man with a bellyful of the classics is

century classic). In this light, the classic means the totems of nppressors forced on unwilling subject peoples (including children everywhere) - the classroom equivalent of Gatling guns and Jim Crow laws. Yet the reactinn to "imperial" curricula bas taken the

form not of relativism, but pluralism. The scope of the classic merely grows to embrace everybody's sacred works. Penguin may nffer their new, suacily unexpurgated edition of Aesop's Fables, but now Oxford boasts a volume of beastly tales from the Sanskrit. The Pancatantra. Our canons have expanded, not collapsed.

When Walter Mosley (judged by Bill Clinton as a classic among thriller writers) was in London recently, he recalled hearing the poet Allen Ginsberg advocate a catch-all canon that would welcome the Bhagavad Gita as well as the Oresteian trilngy. "Aw, man," thought the young Mosley, "Do I really have to read all this stuff?" I'm afraid so. The scrambled, mingled traditions that mark our culture without frontiers mean that the wouldbe "educated person" has beavier beggage than ever to carry.

So which standards should apply in the booming Classics supermarket? Nick Hornby's

portrays nur urge in use comforting lists as sticking-plaster for fractured lives as its musicmaven hero compiles his Top Five for every conceivable pop genre. In humage tn Hornby, here are my Top Five criteria for would-he classic art-works: Endurance over time.

2. The strength in cross barriers when made accessible in audiences beynnd its cultural home. 3. The power to define a genre,

at their highest peak or else by fixing a new form. 4. A compelling connectinn to the fundamental forces in hu-

man experience. 5. An ability to yield new interpretations that make sense in spite of diverse emphases.

Armed with these yardsticks, how does Guilty Men measure up? It survives and inspires others as a benchmark for controversial prose in a Swiftian mode of savage irony (1 and 3). It speaks from a people besieged by aggressors about resistance to tyrants and the defence of liberty (2 and 4). Like many nther political works, though, the fifth gear is lacking. It means just what it means, without a rich hinterland nf ambiguity or multiplicity. Still, "Cato"s blast deserves to pass its Classic MoT. Congratulatinns, Michael Foot: the

either by exhibiting its qualities

doors of Immortality are swinging open before you.

GUS surprises City with £500m American bid

City Correspondent

GREAT Universal Stores made a surprise move yesterday when it agreed to pay £500m for an American database and credit referencing company while it is still embroiled in the £1.6bn hostile bid for Argos.

GUS is buying Metromail Corporation, of Lombard, Illiunis, in a deal which analysts said made the company an even more powerful player in the fast-growing US information

The company denied the deal might distract management from the Argos bid. Lord Wolfson, chairman of GUS, said: "We are a diversified group and the management team that has been working on this deal is not the same as the ones that has been processing Argos. There will be no

Analysts expressed surprise at the timing of the deal but vember 1996, just three said GUS could cope. "I don't months after Lord Wolfson beimagine they would have done came chairman, GUS paid this if would detract form the £1bn for Experian, one of Argos bid," said Alexia Walker at Paribas, Mark Josefson at Panmure Gordon added a note of caution: "It probably slightly reduces their ability to increase their offer for Argos, but with its strong balance sheet it could still pull it off." GUS shares fell 11.5p to 773.5p on

the news. Lord Wolfson said there would be significant synergies in terms of product development and costs with its Direct Marketing Technology business, another US data company which GUS acquired for £300m last April. Metromail specialises in sectors such as telecommuni-

catinns while D-Tech concentrates on financial services and Thomas. catalogue shopping data.

D-Tech approached Metromail with a view to a merger last year. After GUS acquired D-Tech, it too started to look at the possibilities of putting together the two businesses whose head offices are just 10 miles

Analysts appeared support-ive of the deal. "Before GUS bid for Argos, this was the deal everyone expected them to do. GUS' balance sheet is strong and it can easily afford to do both this and Argos and still have relatively low gearing," said Ashley Thomas, at SG Securi-

GUS had net cash of £600m net debt of £1.9bn if its succeeds in its bid for Argos as well as the Metromail acquisition.

GUS is already a significant perator in the US credit and information market. In No-America's largest database companies. Since then Lord of deals in both its information and its retailing businesses. "He seems to be transforming er at 607p.

the company," said Mr

Under the terms of the deal GUS is paying \$31.50 (£19.10) per share which include taking on the company's debts. The deal has the backing of RR Donnelly, a printing company and the Metromail management which between them own 40 per cent of the shares.

GUS has paid a high price for a business which recorded a loss of \$1.4m on sales of \$328m last year. However, this was after exceptional items of \$37m. The company made pretax profits of \$26.5m in the previous year.

Lord Wolfson admitted that GUS had paid a full price but at its last year end and will have added: "The acquisition will unite two complementary businesses bringing economies of scale and a wider range of services which will be to the benefit of the customers of both

Bart Faber, chairman and chief executive officer of Metromail, said the information and database industry was consolidating and that this deal represented a way of taking Wolfson has pulled off a string advantage of growth opportu-

Argos shares closed 5p low-

LORD WOLFSON'S ACQUISITION SPREE

Aug 96 Lord Wolfson appointed GUS chairman Spends (1 bn on Experian, US credit agency

Signs £900m property joint venture with British Land Buys Direct Marketing Technology of US for £300m

Pays Burton £20m for Innovations mail order Buys SG2, French information group for £70m

Launches £1.6bn hostile hid for Argos Feb 98 Spends £500m on Metromail, US database compar



RAGE SOFTWARE, the games group, yesterday announced that it had signed a deal to develop a 'shoot 'ern up' game for the Sony Playstation, the games console beloved by teenagers. Details of the game, which will be released in 1999, are secret but Rage promised it would mix 'addictive gameplay with stunning graphics'. Shares in Rage jumped 3.5p to 14.5p or 30 per cent on news of the deal. Somy's

Playstation is one of the most successful games consoles around, with more than 30 million installed world-wide. Its games include the popular Sonic the Hedgehog (above). Paul Finnegan, Rage's managing director, said: We are very much aware of the fantastic opportunities that this deal represents us as a company.' The news follows closely on a deal with Compaq to load Rage's Incoming

game on all of the computer firm's Presario 4608, and 4800 personal computers. Juan Montes, vicepresident of development at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. said the contract showed the company's commitment to attracting the best within the software development business. We have sees the initial game design and are very excited by this product's potential,' he said.

Barings creditors to get limited payouts

CREDITORS of Barings, which collapsed in 1995 after Nick Leeson ran up debts of more than £800m, could receive pay-outs later this mouth.

Erast & Young, the bank's liquidator, yesterday outlined terms of the proposals, which should result in a pay-out of £190m to Barings' bondholders.

Alan Bloom, national head of corporate recovery at Ernst & Young, called the proposals a major step forward". He added: "Agreement with the creditors by the summer would

be very pleasing."
Three classes of bondholders lent Barings a total of £275m between 1986 and 1994. Investors included major life and pension funds and Downside, Britain's oldest Roman Catholic public school.

jeus on

rests

However, under the proposals put forward yesterday, not all bondholders will be fully recompensed.

Those investors who bought Barings' floated rate notes in 1994 [the 1994 notes] stand to gain most. These bondholders lent the bank a total of \$150m (£90.1m), and will be repaid 6 their initial investment in full, with interest. George Seligman, a partner

in Slaughter & May and an adviser to Ernst & Young, said: Holders of the 1994 notes will be delighted with this." Holders of 1986 notes will re-

ceive \$59 per \$100 invested. Holders of 1994 perpetuals will receive £24 per £100 invested.

Jonathan Stone, who heads pressure group representing holders of 1994 perpetuals. called the settlement "disappointing", saying he would have liked to see bondholders being fully recompensed. But Mr Stone said he expected the bondholders to accept the plan. Something is better than nothing", he said.

Mr Seligman, of Slaughter & May, explained that the 1986 notes were issued on less favourable terms than the 1994

From a credit perspective, 1994 perpetuals rated lower than both the 1986 notes and

the 1994 notes, he added. However, Mr Seligman said the bargaining position of holders of the 1994 perpetuals had been strengthened by the threat

of legal action. These bondholders, led by Mr Stone, had issued a writ against Barings and some of its former directors.

Pundits braced for Taxpayers paying the penalty for Inland Revenue error interest rate hike

By Lea Paterson

THE CITY was yesterday steeling itself for further interest rate hikes following the publication of stronger-than-expected economic data.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) said the UK current account was in surplus by £116m in the last quarter of 1997 - economists had predicted the account would go into the red.

The better-than-expected current account figures were largely due to a £2.7bn surplus in investment income. The deficit in traded goods rose significantly-from £2.8bn to £4.2bnsuggesting UK exporters are still being squeezed by the high pound.

Economists were also surprised by an upward revision to economic growth over the last quarter of the year.

The ONS said GDP grew by 0.6 per cent between October and December last year, an upward adjustment of 0.2 percentage points. GDP growth for the year as whole was revised downwards slightly from 3.2 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Dharshini David, economist at HSBC Markets, said: "The big surprise in these numbers [the GDP figures] was the upward revision to quarter-on-quarter GDP largely reflecting upward revisions to the consumer expenditure component."

Anticipation of a forthcoming interest rate rise sent sterling rising against the mark. The pound closed up almost a pfennig at DM3.035, down from the day's high of DM3.05.

Kevin Darlington, economist at ABN Amro, said: "Upwardly revised consumer spending will favour the interest rate bawks".

Minutes from the February meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee - which sets UK interest rates - revealed the committee was split four against four on whether to raise rates. Only the decision by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, to use his casting vote for a rate freeze kept the cost of bortowing on hold at 7.25 per cent.

The City will now be anniously waiting for January earnings data, due out next Wednesday along with February unemployment figures. Strong growth in pay could persuade the MPC to

raise rates at its next meeting. Charles Goodhart, one of the MPC hawks who voted to raise rates in February, said yesterday. "Half a per cent [year-on-year pay growth] is probably sustainable with the present inflation target but if it goes very much further, either in wages or earnings, then I think there would be severe difficulties in meeting the 2.5 per cent target".

By Andrew Verity

TENS OF THOUSANDS of taxpayers have been wrongly fined £100 each because of failures by the Inland Revenue in ax returns, it emerged yesterday.

The Adjudicator's Office, which bandles complaints against the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise, said it had received calls from taxpayers, disgruntled that they had been fined despite returning forms on time.

Mike Savage, a spokesman for the Adjudicator's Office,

SHARES in Hornby, the mod-

el railway and Scalentric com-

pany soared 28 per cent

yesterday amid stock market ru-

mours that the company may

face a takeover bid. The 57p

rise to 257.5p, a five-year high,

forced the company to make a

statement saying it was "not in

discussions with any party

about a takeover or sale of the

Hornby shares were sus-

pended at 11.40am after the

early rise in the stock but trad-

By Nigel Cope

penalty notices have been sent leading networks of tax agents. out saying You have to pay a Gerry Hart, head of Tax Team to be scanned directly into the £100 penalty' when in fact that and a former chairman of the return had been submitted.

"People have been worried said many agents had received processing a rush of last-minute about the penalty notices which penalty notices when clients had have been wrongly sent to tax agents. We think there are going to be some difficulties with the penalties being charged."

Those with a "reasonable excuse" - a definition which should include delays in the Revenue's computer system should succeed in having the more than 670,000 taxpayers. fine removed because forms had

Homby has had a chequered

past but has been improving

more recently. It has withdrawn

from the toy and radio control

trating more on its core trains

and Scaleatric businesses which

it is aiming more at adult en-

thusiasts rather than children.

slight fall in profits to £973,000.

It has been cutting overheads

and improving its manufactur-

ing and sourcing operations. It

has enjoyed success with mod-

In November it posted a

market and has been concen-

Hornby denies knowledge of a bid as

its shares steam ahead by 30 per cent

ly simply because forms had not been logged on to the system before fines were issued. The Revenue has slapped fines on

suburban commuter lines.

speedboat manufacturer and

expanded into the cut throat toy

market. The shares hit a low of

96p in 1995 but have since

been recovering under new

chairman Peter Newey. Sales of

its core trains and Scalextric

games and accessories have

been selling well.

ing started again in late after- el railway collectors by intro-

Returns compiled using the been date-stamped on receipt. Revenue's software - rather

Chartered Institute of Taxation,

The Revenue's computer

system is thought to have sent

ont the penalties antomatical-

submitted forms on time.

The finding was backed by than a paper form -- have lacked tion professionals yesterday the barcodes which allow them Revenue's computer system, of its own mistakes. designed by the US computer giant EDS. Instead, all forms have to be input manually.

The Revenue yesterday admitted that some taxpayers had been sent penaldes despite returning forms by the deadline of 31 January. But a spokeswoman said taxpayers could have the fines revoked if they appealed to the Revenue within 30 days of receiving a penal-

ty notice. The country's leading taxa-

Taxpayers can contact The Adjudicator's Office on 0171

urged the Revenue to show le-

niency with taxpayers in the light

dent of the Association of Tax-

ation Technicians said the

Revenue's system "got very

close to breakdown" last De-

cember and January over self-

assessment. The Chartered

Institute of Taxation said it

would be keeping a close eye on

the Revenue's working defini-

tion of a "reasonable excuse".

Frank Collingwood, presi-

Name change scoots Freepages into court battle

By Michael Harrison

WHEN Freepages, the teleducing liveried ranges which inphone directory service, decidclude locomotives with the ed to change its brand name to Virgin and GNER colours as Scoot, it didn't think anybody well as the Eurostar trains and would be upset. But it reckoned without a firm of south coast res-In the 1980s Hornby ran into idential letting agents. the sidings when it acquired a

To Freepages, Scoot was a meaningless and inoffensive term that could be adopted in any country where people wanted to find out where the nearest plumber, bookshop or taxi

But to Michael Deacon of Allan & Bath in Bournemouth, Scoot meant something else altogether - an animal and bird re- Deacon. "It was as if he was pellent used to prevent cats, dogs, rabbits, hares, squirrels and

even from fouling the garden. Earlier this week an Oxfordshire County Court judge agreed with Mr Deacon and ordered Scoot to repay Allan & Bath a year's subscription fees and its out of pocket expenses, a sum totalling £2,750.

The clincher apparently

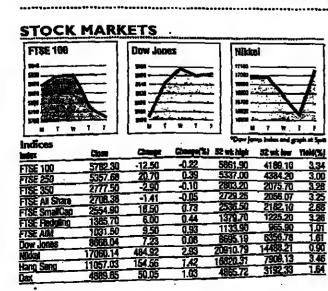
came when Mr Deacon's side produced a box of the animal repellent in court whereupon it was ustantly recognised by the district judge. The lawyer for Freebages took one look at it and his jaw sort of dropped," said Mr

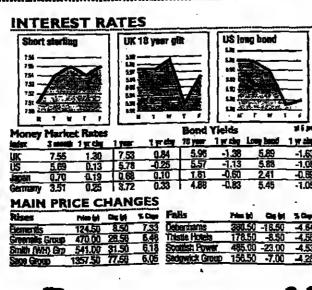
thinking to himself Beam me up Scottie'

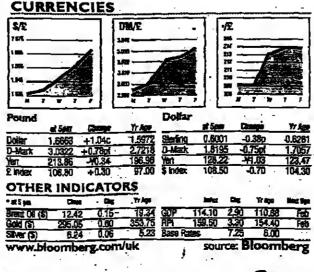
In its defence Freepages, which is now valued at £145m. maintained: "There is no difference between Freepages and Scoot apart from the name."

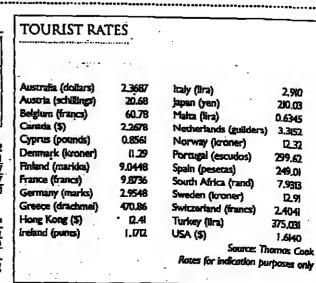
The judge took a different view ruling that the change of trading name "represented a fundamental breach of con-

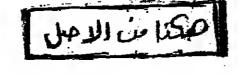
Freepages shrugged off its court defeat, saying it had 35,000 subscribers in the UK and had only received two complaints, including the one from Allan &













JEREMY WARNER ON THE INVESTMENT INSANITY FEEDING THE RISE IN THE SHARE PRICES OF BIG COMPANIES.

Watch out for the FTSE 100 investment bubble

Anyone who still swears by Schumacher's ue of Britain's top 100 companies source famous incantation - Small is Beautiful -plainly hasn't been reading his business pages lately. The corporate and investment reality is that big is beautiful. The bigger

Let me explain. Most of us still have some attachment to the idea of small enterprise, with its self help attributes, capacity for innovation and powers of wealth creation. But the truth of the matter is that big is where the action and money lies. Size gives competitive advantage across a wide front, reinforcing the power of the large corporation and making it more and more difficult for smaller competitors to

Big companies tend to attract the best and smartest people, they have the low-est operating costs and lowest cost of capital. They have the best IT and management systems, and, if you believe the hype that surrounded Glaxo's at-tempt to merge with SmithKline Beecham, their greater market clout and R&D expenditure also gives them a better chance

Furthermore, they tend to command a premium in terms of stock market valuation and in recent years their share prices have generally outperformed those of smaller companies. On the face of it, there's no contest; big is simply better.

Just recently, the total stock market val-

through the one trillion pound mark for the first time. To be fair, this may not be as significant a milestone as it sounds. Because big companies like to merge one with another and takeover smaller ones, the FTSE 100 share index is bound to suck value into itself. When two Footsie stocks merge, as General Accident and Commercial Union are at the moment, it creates a vacancy which when filled increases the total value of the index accordingly.

Even so, the statistic is not entirely without meaning. Today, the FTSE 100 share index accounts for more than 76 per cent of the stock market's total value. When the index was launched 14 years ago to act as a benchmark for equity futures, the equivalent proportion was only 65 per cent. Put another way, the share of stock market value enjoyed by the next largest 800 companies has fallen from 35 per cent to 24 per cent. On valuation yardsticks too, big companies have significantly outperform their smaller brethren. The FTSE100 index has outperformed the mid cap index (consisting of the next largest 250 companies by market capitalisation) by 30 per cent over the last two years. The yield is lower on the FTSE 100 and the earnings multiple higher.

So what's my point? OK, so I could rail against the power of the corporate state, lament the way in which big business is stiprotest about how big corporations are 30 years. starving smaller enterprise of capital, or generally get worked up about what n rum old business all this globalisation and consolidation really is. But actually the point I want to make is a comparatively narrow one. I want to examine the proposition that the big is beautiful phenomenon is helping to create a potentially dangerous investment bubble in the FTSE 100 share

I know this sounds a little alarmist, a hit over the top. But just listen to this. Caps, a research organisation which

closely monitors investment patterns, this week published its annual survey of pension fund performance. It showed that the collective performance of the big four fund management groups - Mercury, Schroders, PDFM and Gartmore - was 0.7 per cent less than the overall median for fund man-

For UK equities, this median was itself 1.6 per centage points below the performance of the index, which last year returned 23.6 per cent. For overseas equities, the position was a good deal worse - a per-formance of only 6.1 per cent against an index return of 19. These figures may look insignificant, but if repeated over time the effect of this comparative under performance on your pension would be sizeable - in some circumstances perhaps as much

It is hardly surprising, then, that pensioo funds have begun to ask themselves why they are paying all that money for what looks to be pretty poor active fund management. Why oot just stick the money in the safe haven of the index, in a basket of the world's leading companies, and watch it grow? There's growing evidence that this is precisely what they are doing. The market share of the big four for new business fell from well over a half in 1993 to 38 per cent last year. Much of this business has gone into index tracker

Moreover, there is plenty of official or semi official support for it. In a recent report on the high cost of personal pensions, John Bridgeman, director general of fair trading, pointed to the underperformance of active fund management and suggested the way forward was in low cost tracker funds. If the same policy stance is taken with the Government's proposed stakebolder pension, there will be an even larger wall of money flowing into the index.

The same follow my leader exercise is repeated within the index. Because banks and pharmaceuticals have sharply outperformed other stocks over the last year, those funds which aren't in these sectors are in trouble. If you are going to lose your job for being underweight in Barclays,

fling competition and consumer choice, as 40 per cent of retirement income after you make pretty sure you are not, regardless of any rational assessment of the stock market going forward.

All this is being compounded and exaggerated by the activities of hedge fund operators and the futures market. The hedge funds play off the fear among fund managers of indexation, huying up the stocks where the institutions are underweight and then squeezing the price higher. The need to "delta hedge" futures positions creates its own form of insanity. If stock prices go higher, the futures position must be underpinned with bigger purchases of physical stock, driving the narket higher still.

The big investment banks and securities houses are equally culpable. They all have their "global investment priority" hit lists, their "nifty one hundred and fifties", or whatever. Much of this activity takes place in a manner which is divorced from the fundamentals of investment judgment. Fund management is becoming dominated by the belief that big stocks only go up and woe betide you if you miss the elevator.

I'm not going in predict a stock market crash or anything as rash as that. Nonetheless, all previous investment bubbles bave been dominated by large stocks ton. There is an insanity in what's banpening and the dangers of it are all 100

Lonrho set to focus on its mining interests

By Michael Harrison

LONRHO yesterday took a major stride towards becoming a pure mining company after splashing out £344m to acquire a South African coal producer and unveiling plans to buy back 21 per cent of its shares.

The two deals mark the end of a tortuous series of threeway oegotiations between Lon-South Africa's Anglo-American corporation. and the mining company JCI and were broadly welcomed in the City. Lonrho said it expected the deals to increase a coal producer with annual earnings from oext year

oowards. Once Lonrbo completes the demerger of its African trading business and the sale of its Princess hotels chain, the group, founded by Tiny Rowland 40 years ago, will be pared down to a pure coal, platinum and gold mining busi-

TOL

Lonrbo is buying the coal producer Tavistock from South Africa's JCI group for £167m and merging the business with its existing Duiker coal interests to create a combined group with 5 per ceot of the interantionally traded coal mar-

At the same time, JCI is swapping some of its gold and platinum interests for a 21 per cent shareholding in Lonrho owned by Anglo-American and then selling the stake on to Lonrho for £177m. Anglo will be left with a 7.4 per cent stake. Lonrho is buying the shares for 106p each compared with a closing price yesterday of 99.5p

The Anglo shareholding originally belonged to Mr Rowland, who sold it to the German financier Dicter Bock, who in turn sold it to Anglo in 1996 as part of a strategy for Lonrbo to link up with the South African conglomerate.

Shareholders are expected to vote on the two deals at an

extraordinary meeting in April. This will allow time for the buyback to be completed before Lonhro demerges its African trading interests in May, removing an overhang of stock from the market.

Ooce the two deals are complete, Lonrho will be a group with sales of about £1bn, assets of £540m and borrowings of £470m. The sales of the Priocess hotels chain is due to be completed by about June and is expected to raise at least \$500m (£300m).

Lonrho will then consist of sales of about 22 million tonnes, à platinum business with controlling interests in four mines in South Africa and a gold mining division whose principal asset is a 33 per cent stake in Ashanti Goldfields of Ghana.

One mining analyst said: "The simple fact is that they are now managing to conclude deals which they said they would. It was imperative they did this before losing all credibility.'

Nicholas Morrell, Lonrho's chief executive, said the overriding objective had been to remove the overhang of shares which bad dogged the company for the last 18 months. He accepted that it bad been a frustrating period for sharebolders - Lonrho's share price has more than balved to just

over 100p in the last two years. But he said the challenge of turning Lonrbo from a collection of unrelated businesses ioto a focused mining compaoy bad been "pretty formida-

All the while, Mr Rowland, who still owns 3 million Lonrho shares, has been sniping from the sidelines.

"He is a sharebolder along with everyone else," said Mr Morrell. "I hope he sees the merit of these transactions and supports the resolutions at the meeting."



Tesco: Supermarkets want to improve working relations with staff

Tesco signals end to the 'us and them' syndrome

By Barrie Clement Labour Editor

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday bailed a new industrial relations agreement at Tesco as a prime example of how the "partnership" approach should work under New Labour.

The stores group, the biggest private sector employer of union members, unveiled a system for consulting staff and communicating with them as part of an attempt to break down the "us and them"

The deal has been struck with Usdaw, the shopworkers' union with the help of Cranfield University, but it allows con-union members to participate. --

Micbael Wemms, Tesco's retail director, said the involvement of Usdaw was critical to the whole process. "We believe that unionised companies can do better than nonunionised providing the structure is right," he said.

Ian McCartney, Trade and Industry Minister, said he was delighted that Tesco and Usdaw were strengthening their relationship. "It is a milestooe for both parties. Employers working closely with their workforce is at the heart of a successful and competitive business."

an average circulation of

376,000, with a peak sale of

618,000 on Monday. In France,

L'Equipe sells 372,000 copies a

Dunloe wins battle for control of Ewart

DUNLOE House, the Dublin-based property company, has won the bid battle for Ewart, the Belfast property group. It said yesterday its takeover offer for the company has been declared unconditional by the Takeover Panel. The offer was declared unconditional after Ewart withdrew an appeal to the panel, in which it had challenged Dunloe's carlier claim to have won cootrol of the company. After Ewart rejected two offers, Dunloe was forced to increase its bid when Moyne Shelf Company - a firm set up by Belfast businessmen - emerged as a white knight bidder in late February.

Heineken's liquid assets

HEINEKEN, the Dutch drinks giant, yesterday said the group had 1.9bn guilders (£560m) in liquid assets in its "war chest" for acquisitions and could attract extra money. Heineken's expansion policy prioritises countries where it already has a presence, to streogthen its existing positions, the company's chairman, Karel Vuursteen, said. Heineken reported a 16 per cent rise in 1997 net profit to £761m and announced it would dilute its shares with a bonus issue and a five-for-one split.

Bank acts over deposits

THE Bank of England has obtained injunctions against three individuals suspected of illegally taking bank deposits. The three are Balakrishnan Menou, Seymour Maitland-Kraft and Robin Leslie Peters, all based in the Loodon area. The three meo are understood to have been trading under the oames Queensborough Investments Limited and QB Investments (UK) Limited both in the Isle of Man and on the UK mainland. The Bank of England's investigation is ongoing, and it is appealing to the public to come forward with information.

FirstGroup's bus venture

FIRSTGROUP, the transport operator, has formed an alliance with Hong Kong's New World Development Company to bid for the franchise to operate bus services in Britain's former island colony. The new venture will be called New World First Holdings and would bid to operate Hong Kong's China Motor Bus franchise after it expires in August, 1998. The venture, 26 per cent owned by FirstGroup, would compete with five others who have responded to a government teoder to run 88 hus routes oo the island. Stagecoach, the Perth-based transport group has also bid jointly with the Chi-

Media Business in bid talks

MEDIA Business Group has been approached about a possible bid for the company. "The company has been approached to engage in preliminary discussions which may or may not lead to an offer for the whole of the issued share capital of the company," Media Business said in a brief statement, adding that it would keep shareholders informed of developments. The company did not give further details. The company's shares shot up 34 per cent on the news, rising 30.5p to 132p by the close of trading.

COMPANY RESULTS						
	Turnover £	Pre-tax ∠	EPS	Dividend		
Flahers Intel (F)	40.4m (36 7m)	3.0m (1.9m)	1.5p (1.4p)	0 65p (0.5p)		
Yites Group (F)	144.6m (148.5m)	37.8m (52 6m)	53.4p (58 Op)	14.0p (12 16p)		
Thomas Winter (i)	1.89m (1.97m)	-0.107m (40.0m)	-1.44p (0 48p)			
Whitsharoh (F)	41 05m (47 7m)	1 59m (-1.28m)	5.5p (28.91p)	1 Op (n4)		
(F) - Final (2) - Interim	† EPS in pre-taceo	liocals "Dividend to	be paid as a FID	1		

Sunday newspaper kicks off sporting week

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE FIRST edition of a newspaper devoted entirely to sports will hit the newsstands tomorrow. Called Sport First, the paper will be a 48-page broadsheet which is hoping to cash in on the apparently insatiable

readers for sports coverage. The paper is aimed at the "serious" sports fan although it will bave the liveliness of a tabloid.

demand among newspaper

Keith Young, the entrepreneur who has funded the venture with more than £1.5m of his own money, said the paper was aimed at readers of the Sunday broadsheets who want more sports coverage. Priced at 50p, it is designed to be a secondary purchase for Sunday newspaper readers.

Mr Young's is aiming for a circulation of 150,000, and the paper needs to sell 100,000 sales a week to break even. Mr Young regards this as a modest target. "You've got 17 million newspapers produced in this country every day," he says. "I'm trying to expand the market by 0.9 per

The venture is a slimmeddown version of Mr Young's original idea, which was to launch a daily sports paper. However, he struggled to find funding for the idea and eventually settled for a more modest Sunday format.

The paper will have a core editorial staff of about 20, but will rely heavily on stringers and freelancers to supply match re-ports. It will be divided into two 24-page sections, with the secand segment devoted entirely to football. It will also focus heavily on statistics, offering a comprehensive results service for

leagues. The success of BSkyB has shown that British consumers are willing to pay beavily for access to sport, especially football. However, no pure sports paper has ever succeeded.

The format works well in other European countries, though. Italy's Gazzetta dello Sport has

Mirror Group, which owns the Sporting Life, is believed to be preparing to expand the racing newspaper into a general sports title later this year. Mr Young also has plans to even minor regional fontball

expand First Sport, first producing extra issues on Saturday and Monday, before moving to a seven-day operation. However, he says the decision to expand will be driven by the market.

"We can't become a daily until the market wants one," he

WHO'S SUING **WHO**

IOHN WILLCOCK



A Buckinghamshire-based engineering company is suing Lloyds Bank and Ladbrokes for the return of over £5 million which it claims the company's own finance director stole from his employers over an eight year period, by forging signatures on hundreds of cheques.

The writ issued this week by Maindec Computer Engineering of Wooburn Green. Bucks, says that Alan Paternan, a senior accountant with the company, spent large amounts of the money to fund his taste for

The writ claims that Mr Pateman forged 30 cheques to Ladbroke Racing worth £129,000, and over 130 cheques totalling £280,500 to Ladbrokes Limited, in 1994-96

Mr Pateman was employed as group accountant by Maindec from about 1984 to 23 September 1996. For the last five years with the company Mr Pateman was Finance

Maindec alleges that: "Since about 1988

until his resignation Mr Pateman repeatedly forged the signature of Roger Timms (a Maindec director) on a substantial number of cheques and payment instructions drawn on the said bank accounts of the Plaintiff companies, and without lawful authority abstracted funds in an amount exceeding £5

The writ goes on to say: "Mr Pateman also dishonestly made out cheques from Maindec's bank accounts to persons connected with him, again by repeatedly forging Mr Timms' signature on cheques."

"From at least March 1994 he made out payments in a total amount exceeding £150,000 inter alios to his wife (Bronwyn Pateman), bookmaker (I Morris Ltd) and another bookmaker (R. Bazell) as well as various other parties."

The saga appears to have started in January 1988 when Mr Pateman opened hank accounts with the Jersey Branch of National Westminster Bank in the name of "Michael Pateman trading as Parnell & Kass" and

"Michael Pateman trading as Keats Associates."

Maindec says that Mr Pateman had complete control of these accounts, and they were opened with the sole purpose "to steal money from Maindec and Computer Sales Agency (Waverley) Ltd and thereafter to conceal these monies." The writ continues: "Between January

1988 and January 1997 £5.23 million was paid into the Jersey accounts by Mr Pateman. All of that money represented money stolen either from Maindec or Waverley." Mr Pateman also withdrew money in cash and from the Maindec dollar account.

the writ claims, allegedly over US\$45,000 between 1994 -96. "Mr Pateman concealed his thefts by destroying Maindec accounting records and by means of numerous false accounting en-

tries which he caused to be made in Maindec's books," the writ says. Maindec is claiming that Lloyds allowed these withdrawals without lawful authori-

become involved in the aforesaid wrongdoing of Mr Pateman." Maindec is demanding the return of all funds unlawfully withdrawn by Mr Pateman.

Bernie Ecclestone's racing business Formula One Administration is being sued for

around US\$200,000 in lost advertising revenue by MTV s.a.l., a French language TV station based in Beirut. MTV s.a.l., which is owned by Murr Television, has no connection with the better

known pop video TV channel, MTV. MTV s.a.l. claims it signed a contract on 2 March 1998 to broadcast all the Formula One Grand Prix car races of 1998 in the

Lebanoo in the French language. The Beirut station then started signing contracts with its own sponsors and advertisers. The day after the contract was signed. Formula One Administration cancelled the contract, saying that b had already grant-

ed carclusive broadcasting rights for the races

ty, and that Lloyds and Ladbrokes "have to another company. MTV s.a.l. has lodged a writ in the High Court in London against Mr Ecclestone's company, claiming "damages for breach of contract, negligent misrepresentation, negligent misstatement and for malicious falsehood." It is understood that MTV s.a.l. is claiming damages equal to its forecast advertising earnings for the 1998 season, which would have been around US\$200,000.

> Lastly, I must mentioo Mattel of the US, the maker of the Barbie and Ken dolls, which is suing the British men's magazine FHM over photos of the dolls which the mag ran recently to illustrate an article on

The pictures showed the children's toys engaged in "improper, sexually explicit and offensive positions," according to Mattel.

The company filed a law suit in Los Angeles in order, it said, to protect Barbie from heing "associated with anything obscene, vulgar or distasteful".

Takeover bid talk boosts C&W as gossips dial in

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

survived a hlue-chip somer-

Takeover gossips dialled ioto Cable; Orange cootin- strike_ ued to eojoy Thursday's opbeat trading statement and cent shareholding.

Cable shares climbed 25p to 700, a closing peak, in brisk merchant bank, was behind

The telecoms group was said to be in the sights of Continental interests; Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom, operating in up 46.4 poiots. By midtandem, were ideotified as afternoon it was off 36.7. the most likely predators.

believed to have held talks discomfort of their peers. US information company.

TELECOM groups Cable with a number of overseas The mid cap index gained and Wireless and Orange group and on at least one occasioo got round the negotisault which killed what, at ating with BT. If Cable did one time, seemed likely to be attract a bid it could prompt to another record-breaking BT, still seeking a deal after got away, to mount a counter

Orange, up 21p at 381p, felt the warmth of analytical renewed speculation about upgrades. But that BAe British Aerospace's 21.1 per stake, which logic would suggest must be shortly on the move, was ao important influeoce. It is a peripheral trading. Optimistic talk of an interest of BAe and a tantrated by Lazard Frères, the veritable octwork of communicatioo groups.

Colt Telecom, a takeover short-quoted life, jumped 72.5p to 1,502.5p.

At one time Footsie was closing down 12.5 at 5,782.3. swirled around Cable. It is again, hissfully ignored the

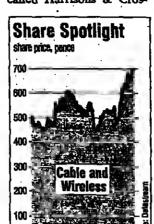
small cap indicator also went to a new high, op 18.5 to 2,554.9.

British Airway's fell 25.5p the American MCI group to 574p after confirming it was considering a proposal from National Express for a joint hid to run the Eurostar rail service. NE advanced 6.5p to 781.5p. Its year's results are due oext week; around £81m is expected, up from £63.9m. Railtrack was another on the right line, up 31p to 971p on its 800p a share offer orches- talising attraction to a possible chaooel rail link

Ahead of oext week's maiden results Diageo fell candidate for much of its 23p to 675p. The international spirits giant held what was regarded as a cautious investment presentation io New York oo Thursday. Great Universal Stores shaded 11.5p to 773.5p after an Rumours have often Supporting indices, once \$831m hid for the shares it did not own in Metromail, a

BAe and Rolls-Royce climbed oo the lifting of the ceilings oo foreign owned shares to 49.5 per cent. Rolls scored the biggest percentage gain, up 6.5p to 275p; BAe

rose 16p to 1,951p. Elementis, the chemical group which used to be called Harrisons & Cros-



MAMJJASONDJFM

field, led the small cap progress, improving 8.5p to 124.5p. The poh chaio Greenalls stirred 28.5p higher to 470p and WH Smith, for so long in the doldrums, rose 31.5p to 541p, highest for

more than five years. Bid action was evident on the undercards. Media Busi- 14.25p m a remarkable 27.1 ness gained 30.5p to 132p after saying it was in talks firmed a deal to produce a which could lead to a bid; new game for the Sooy London & Metropolitan, a Playstation. property group, gained 2.5p to 12.25p as Grantchester appeared with an £6.3m

agreed share exchange offer. The toy maker Hornby was suspended for much of the session after climbing 82p to 282.5p at one time. day's suspension of Dr An-Trading resumed at 257.5p, up 57p oo the day wheo the company said it was not talking "with any party" aboot a takeover or sale. There were early suggestions that large investors to a 86.5p peak on hopes of had been approached with a

group, edged ahead 2.5p to 95p after it disclosed talks were oo which could lead to bids for all or parts of the business. A 6 per cent stake

changed hands recently. Rage, the computer games group, rose 3.25p to million turnover; it con-

Limit, the, the Lloyd's insuraoce group, held at 178.5p after a George Soros trust said it had sold 5.6 million shares at 179p.

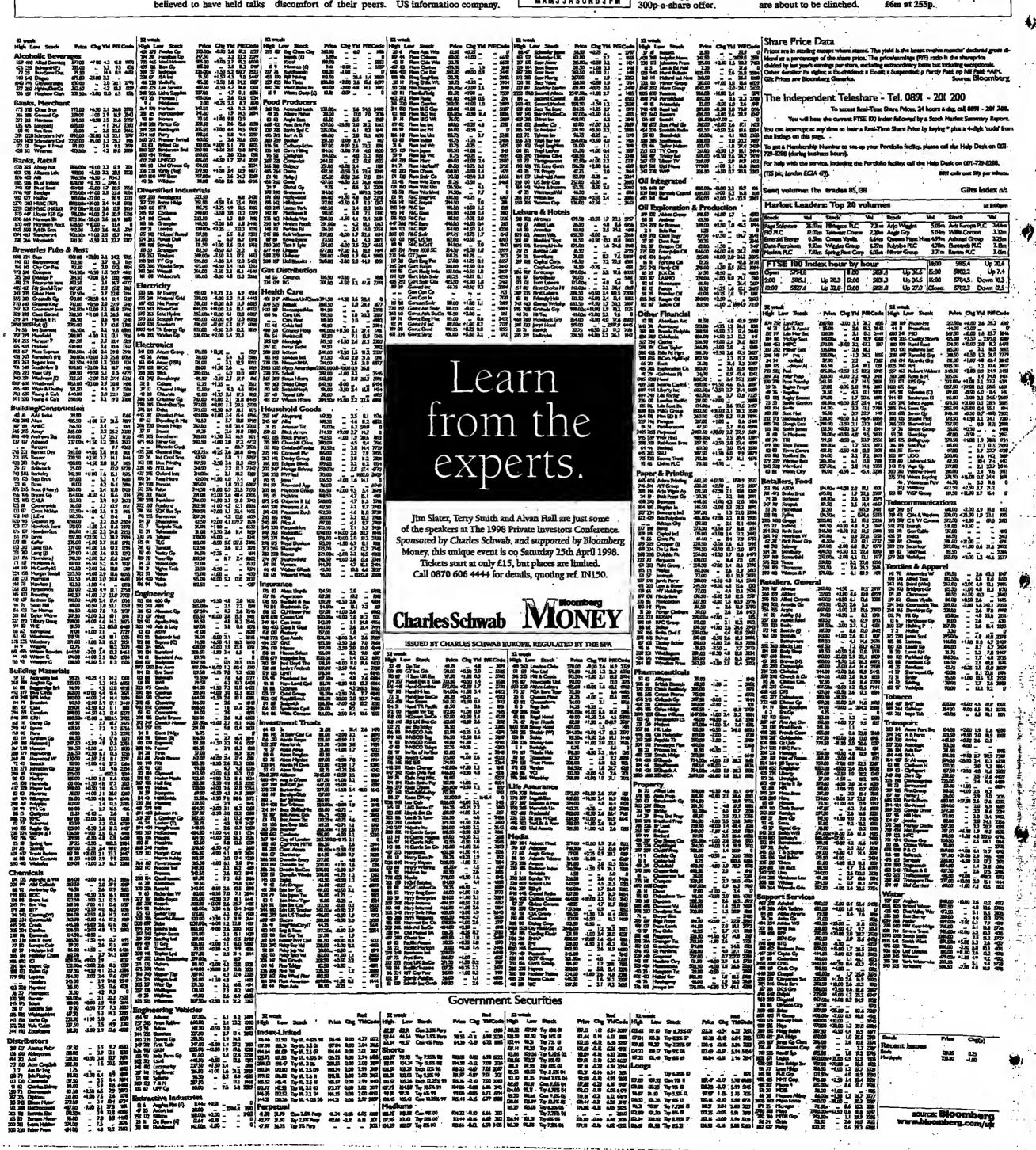
Worries about British Biotech, following Thursdrew Millar, director of clinical research, cootinued to damage the shares, off a further 1.5p to 68.5p.

Verity, with a wafer thin sound system jumped 7.25p more licensing agreements

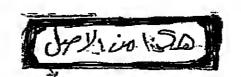
takeover candidate, firmed to 12p as stories strengthened it could be the vehicle for the return of Michael Ashcroft, a controversial businessman who petted £154m when his ADT security group was taken over. Dev Pritchard, founder of the Takare nursing homes chain, is said to be prepared to sell his 29 per Carlisle cent stake. Mr Ashcroft could be working with Tony Berry, ex-Blue Arrow, to reverse a recruitment business into Carlisle where entrepreneur Nigel Wray is chairman.

€:

Farlake, the fund manager which has attracted two new shareholders. With EMS Capital sitting on 25.47 per cent and Derwent, thought to be related to Monaco-based David Rowland, on 14.89 per cent, the Eaglet small company investment trust disclosed it had lifted its interest to 27.12 per cent. There is talk Derwent wants to go 29 per cent. Farlake, with £2m cash, is capitalised at £6m at 255p.



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The lesson from the underclass



Place: Oxford

On the estate nicknamed 'the city' of screaming tyres' because of its teenage joyriders, the residents could teach Gordon Brown a lesson in social investment

IT'S A dangerous thing, irony. I was unkempt. The gardens were under in the act of transferring money to control and the cherry trees and winmy pocket to leave my wallet safely inside the house."I think you'll be all right carrying money through the streets. Daylight mugging isn't that common here," said Jim Hewitt (of whom more shortly). I looked at him and realised he was geotly pulling

my leg.

I was disposed to believe the worst. As I parked my car I noted the ominous brokeo glass by the roadside. This may have been Oxford, the city of the dreaming spires, hut I was on the peripheral housing estate of Blackbird Leys, which was lessness is particularly high among duhbed the city of the screaming the young. And yet the local people tyres when it hriefly hecame the Brands Hatch of teenage car thieves at the beginning of the decade. (There are traffic calming humps everywhere now.)

In fact the glass fragments by my ancient Volvo were oot the product of some delinquent radio-snatcher help savings fund, but the aftermath of a visit by an Oxford City Council van which had backed into the froot of a car belonging to a local resident.

Blackbird Leys, despite its spleodidly hucolic name, is one of the "20 most deprived parts of the country" be targeting in the hudget next week as part of New Labour's New Deal drive against poverty. It did not appear so in the early spring sunshine. If the 30-year-old houses were oot exactly neat they were far from

ter jasmine were in blossom. Most of the cars were considerably less antique than mine, and all but one had wheels and tyres.

The social indicators tell their own story. A majority of the households here rely on benefit. One in 10 of the 14,000 population are single mothers. Unemployment is almost double that of the rest of the city - the oearby Cowley car works now cover less than a quarter of the site occupied when the British motor industry was at its peak. Jobdon't seem to feel deprived.

The aforesaid Jim Hewitt, who is a community worker employed by the ecumenical church at the centre of the estate, seems quite happy to walk through the streets carrying the funds of the estate's self-

Mrs Jean Harwood, a sprightly 68-year-old who meets him at the community centre to put a few pence into her account (she's saving for three or four days bed and breakfast at Eastbourne or Newquay) says that if she woo the which Gordon Brown is supposed to lottery she wouldn't move. Eveo at night Sue Mollington is happy to walk home in the dark without fear wheo the estate's Spotlight Theatre School session is over.

Yes, Blackbird Leys has its problems. Its shopping, transport and



Stretching their wings: playworker and kids at the Dovecote After School club on the Blackbird Leys estate

return bus ride away. The oew extension of 1,000 homes has no shops at all. The sight of women struggling on long walks carrying the week's shopping in bulging carrier

bags is common. But the spirit of enterprise among the people we are now told to call the uoderclass is uplifting. Gordoo Brown's plans for more cash for such estates comes after a Whitehall analysis showing that, although huge amounts of public money are consumed there, most of it is passive speoding such as benefit payments. The Chancellor speoding there towards creating on into employment. work opportunities and improving

quate, The oearest bank is an 80p how, he could do worse than take After School club, is, at the age of a tour of the self-help initiatives of Blackbird Leys.

It is not just the credit union, which now has 200 adult, and as many children, savers. (It also lends to members at just under 13 per cent, compared with the 35-50 per ceot which finance companies offer oo the estate, and the 200 per cent of the loan sharks).

There are, in addition, afterschool playschemes, parent and toddler groups, family centres, parenting courses and much else. As well as providing services such activities build the skills and confidence oow wants to tilt the balance of of local people so that they can go puter work.

Amanda Jones, a mother of four in one of the houses on the isolative ething gel.

health facilities are grossly inade- education and training. To find out who is a key figure in the Dovecote ed new estate I met a group of sin-32, about to take up a job at a supermarket off the estate. "I have discovered skills here I didn't know I had - managing bank accounts, paying wages, authorising spending for equipment, organising events and

coaches for trips." It is the same at the credit union. "We thought we were too thick to be on a committee," said the assistant secretary Liz Seeney, "but nowhere we are using a computer."

Jim Hewitt has so far trained two treasurers who have gooe on to get related lobs, one with the local health authority, the other in com-

gle mothers in their late teens and jumhled as the pile of toys in the middle of the room with which half a dozen toddlers played. (The es-

per week.) The talk was of straightening never listen to what they say, of what they will do when the government cuts benefits to force . "We found that other people

Without the group they we. gether they have taken the first sten toward helping themselves," says Jim Hewitt, who sees the solution to the estate's problems in striking the right balance between proper parenting and economic productivity.

Grants from Gordon Brown on Thesday to multiply and develop. such initiatives would be welcome "but short-term initiatives which expect results by the end of the year or by the next election won't work. You can't change a mindset on welfare in five years. We need a strategic approach on many froots childcare, welfare, drug ahuse, crime. New money needs to be long-term, and you have to consult people at the grassroots more to get the ownership of ordinary people. It's a long job."

Hewitt should know. He has been working and living there for 18 years. At one of the estate's schools, Wesley Green, the deputy head Daphne James came to a similar realisation.

"If I'm going to tell the children it is OK to come from here, then I have to live here too," she says.

Boosting the self-esteem of her pupils is the real answer she feels. Groups like the Spotlight Theatre School do it for some of them; its tap and ballet-dancing pupils successfully audition for shows at the London Palladium and a group performed with Cliff Richard and Vers Lynn in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace for the VE Day anniversary recently.

But Miss James is targeting all early 20s who get together twice a her kids. She has developed a proweek. Their conversation was as gramme for the school which she calls Eagle Potential. A group of lively 12-year-olds talked me through their workbooks with gentate's toy library costs 50p per toy ume eothusiasm for its sleepovers at school, home-made Outward · Bound activities and work with old hair by hlow-drying, of how GPs people. Most interesting perhaps, was the self and group assessmeots she has built in.

them out to work, of absent fathers, 'think we're capable of more than we of the £120 a week fees at the pri- thought ourselves," said a boy vate nursery oearby, of how you eke called Daniel, wide-eyed as if he was ealth authority, the other in comuter work.

At another group, Lemoo Juice, phooe, clothin food, nappies and four makes you feel good. Talking to
the houses of the isolaticething gel.

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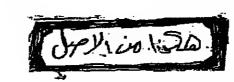
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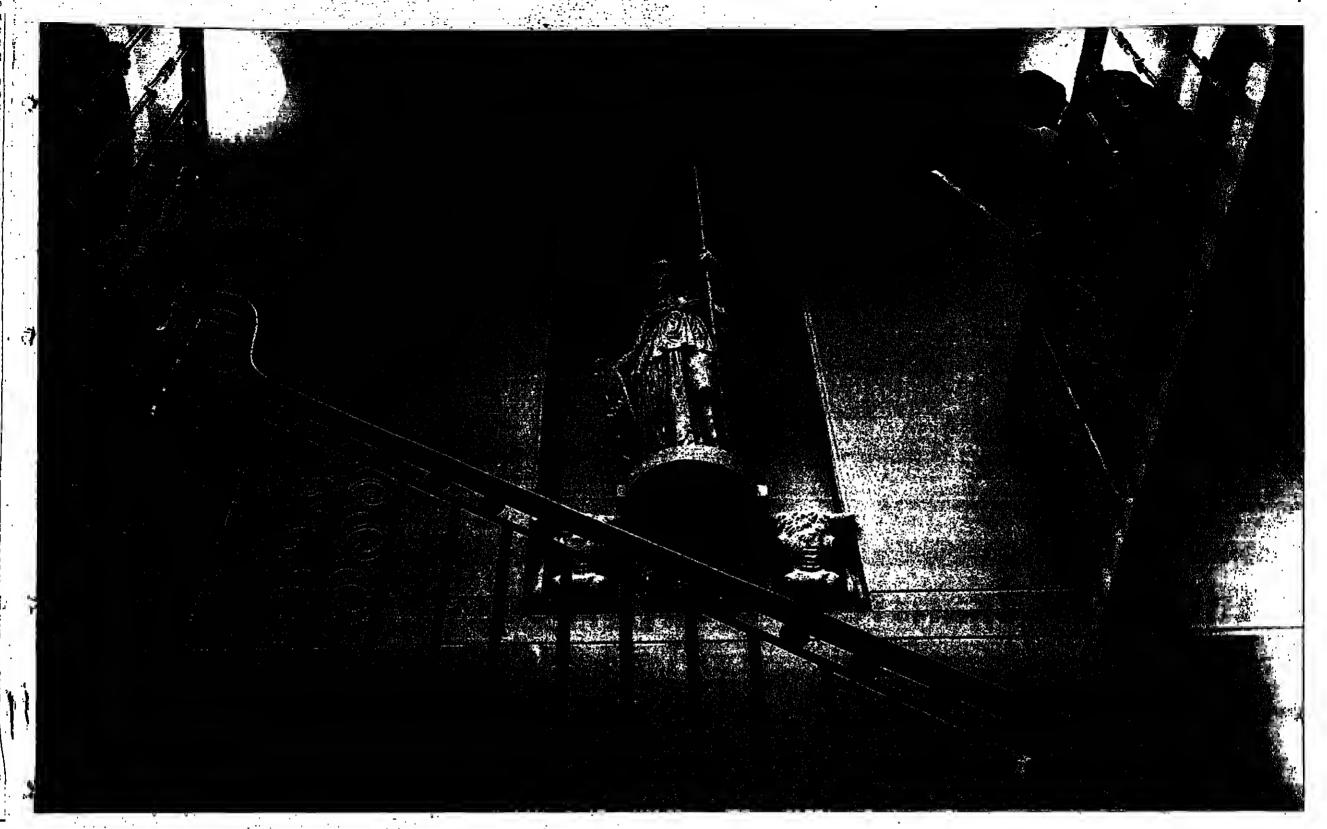
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TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT



Reap where you have Soane

A man in a pink tailcoat opens the door to me. A quick probe in my bag, and I'm allowed into the room with all the gold. There it is, in great fat slabs like rich boys' toffee. A neat, round hole in the thick glass of a display case allows me to poke a forefinger in and touch the fat, buttery surface of £70,000. My damp fingerprint fades reluctantly.

They are rather keen on gold at the Bank of Eng-

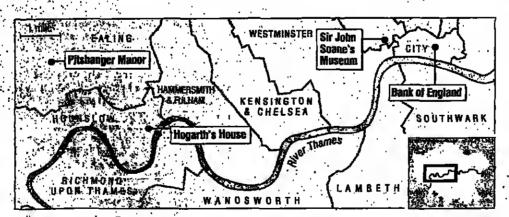
hand. In their museum they have Roman ingots, twined like barley-sugar twists, and Japanese bullion crafted into yin and yang bars - perhaps in an effort to balance more than the books. But I'm not here for the money. Pve come to this great windowless monument to cash to satisfy my curiosity about its architect, Sir John Soane, who, from 1788, spent 45 years of his life on the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street. For him the building became "the: pride and boast of my life".

He had other prides and boasts. There is his other great creation, the Dulwich picture gallery, and his two houses, the London home in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the "country" villa, now subsumed into suburban Ealing. And there were other friends and connections, which I was to string together into a leisurely, Soane-themed amble balf-way across London.

I wandered first through Soane's Bank Stock Office, a high, coolly elegant, oval-shaped hall with curving mahogany counters around the walls. It's not exactly as Soane had it built in the late 18th century. They knocked the lot down in the Twenties when the bank site was redeveloped, but had the decency to rebuild this room in cract accordance with the original plans.

There is a little more Soane to see in the other main room of the museum, the Thirties rounds with, in the centre of the room, a display case of gold ingots piled up like profiteroles, or Ferrero Rocher chocolates.

From the Bank of England and Dulwich's picture gallery to a villa tucked away in the suburbs of Ealing, John Soane left London a rich heritage. Andy Bull sets out on the trail of the architect, collector and genius



Around the room are draped female figures, caryatids, that help to support the domed, glazed roof. These are Soane originals, rescued from the demolition. They look as though they have a

weight on their minds. My second Soane spot is just four stops away on the Central Line, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where be bought three adjacent houses in the tall, grey-brick terrace, and spent several decades creating a unique family home in which to house his remarkable collection of artefacts. It's a house of incredible richness, from the Pompeian red of the dining-room and library, to the sunshine yellow of the first-floor draw-

ing-rooms. Soane created a magical illusion of space by placing mirrors behind exhibits, above bookcases and in recesses, and then he packed every nook and cranny with books, paintings and his vast collection

of architectural fragments. With the ingenious use of great, hinged panels, a room the size of a lift becomes a picture gallery in which the works of art are fanned as if on the pages of a giant book. And what works. Hogarth's The Rake's Progress is here—the tale of a young man's fall, from inheritance to madhouse, in eight canvases. In another tiny room are no fewer than three Canalettos.

This wasn't always a happy house. After his wife

died prematurely Soane described it as "the Mansion of woe". He had boped to fund a dynasty of architects, but neither of his sons - George and John - was interested. The dissolute George, indeed, ridiculed his father's architecture in two spiteful newspaper articles. Soane believed these were the "death blows" that killed his wife. The sons scowl from a portrait in the first-floor drawing-room, looking not unlike the Rake in the series of paintings downstairs.

My Soane-inspired route west took me close to Hogarth's country house, and I got off the Tube at Turnham Green to make a detour. If you have ever driven into London along the A4, and negotiated that landmark of automotive misery, the Hogarth Roundabout, you will have passed the house. When Hogarth bought it in 1749, it was to provide a place of retreat from London for his last 15 summers. Today, despite the fact that four lanes of traffic blare past its door, a high wall ensures that the garden, dominated by a 400-year-old mulberry tree, is still an oasis of calm.

Once, Soane's own country house was just a few fields away. Today it is a grind out through the suburbs. Soane bought Pitshanger Manor in 1800 and turned into his vision of a Regency villa, enhancing its yellow brick façade with four towering columns topped by caryatids, rather like the ones holding up the roof of the Bank of England. Except that, here, they had nothing but sky above them.

Pitshanger Manor has had its ups and downs. The grounds are now Walpole Park, and until the Eighties the house was the town library. But half a dozen rooms have been beautifully recreated, often with reference to watercolours showing original furnishings dating from 1802.

The other imposing thing about the place is the arched gateway. I'd seen it dozens of times, long beA sense of space: John Soane bought Pitshanger Manor, Ealing, in 1800 and turned it into his vision of a Regency villa Photographs: John Voos

fore I'd heard about John Soane. And the reason for that is a little further down the green, in a Thirties building that bears the name Ealing Studios. This was home not just to the Ealing Comedies of the Thirties, Forties and Fifties, but also to much of the BBC's drama and comedy, including Steptoe and Son and Monty Python. Indeed, it still is. And, down the decades, if ever a director has wanted an imposing gateway to film a Rolls Royce purring through, they have popped next door, to this place.

The studios are only infrequently open to the public, but across the green is a pub, the Red Lion, which has always been the local for cast and crew. I finished my journey here, casting an eye over the photographs on the walls. There was Jack Hawkins, looking terribly British in naval uniform, Gina Bellman pouting in Dennis Potter's Blackeyes, and old man Steptoe, Wilfrid Brambell, leering away. And I noticed that he had a look in his eye rather like that of the Rake, and of Soane's dissolute son. What a trio. As George probably never said, but as Harold Steptoe might have: "Fah-vah, do try to behave properly."

Bank of England Museum, Threadneedle Street, open Mon-Fri 10am-Spm, adm free. Sir John Soane's Museum. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, open Tue-Sat 10am-Spm; first Tuesday each month, 6pm-9pm, adm free. Hogarth's House, Great West Road, open Tues-Fri, Ipm-Spm, Sat and Sun I-6pm. adm free. Pitshanger Manor, Mattock Lane, Ealing, open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, adm free.

INSIDE USA

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Manhattan transfers in soft focus

monopoly on romance, but now that air fares across the Atlantic are at their lowest ever, how about New York for the ultimate hearthrob? Adam Shaw is convinced he made the right choice

New York: Woody Allen adores it, Quentin Crisp is devoted to it, Damon Runyon immortalised it and Frank Sinatra named it twice. Here you can fall in love, become romantically attached to a Bloomingdales charge card, and take moodit horse-drawn rides through Central Park.

Woody Allen tells this joke: "And, uh, tsch. I was depressed. I was ... in analysis, I. uh, was suicidal; as a matter of fact, uh, I would have killed myself, but I was in analysis with a strict Freudian and if you kill yourself ... they make you pay for the sessions you miss." Well that's typical New York: manic, comic and ironic.

So it seemed appropriate that trying to arrange a surprise romantic holiday in New York for myself and my girlfriend turned out to be fairly manic and comic itself. First, there was my concern that Nicolette might be arranging a surprise herself, and that on the appointed day I would serve her breakfast in hed with two tickets to New York beside doorman downstairs. Despite the city's

of trying to arrange the trip through travel agents who were told that under no cirfrom upstairs, to agents who thought I had

On the day of the surprise itself, I compiled a cryptic crossword puzzle that she would have to solve before discovering the best events. Fortunately, from London price Broadway ticket and £100 if you buy what the present was or where it was hidden, but she's no good at solving crossword and, truth be told, I'm not much good at designing them, so in the end I just had to tell her where we were going.

There's no shortage of hotels in Manhattan, but I wanted to avoid the chains and go for something more individual. The Plaza and Waldorf hotels are great but expensive: the Paramount and Royalton are very different from the norm, but were full, so I decided to rent an apartment from a friend. Thirty floors up, two streets away from Times Square, the apartment offered a view of the Empire State and Chrysler buildings and the Hudson river. So we spent our first night in New York nursing jet lag, curled up in front of the stunning view, eating Chinese takeaway from those white boxes you see in Hollywood movies.

Having our own apartment, we were able to pretend to be New Yorkers for a week, jogging down to the corner to buy bagels for breakfast, picking up the papers from the doormat and becoming best friends with the

European cities have had the the marmalade, only to find two tickets to brashness, we were amazed at how polite I had already booked tickets to Bring in Da Quiet at the heart of the storm:

Botswana resting on my pillow. We might everyooe was Potholes may scar the streets. Noise Bring in Da Funk. This is no ordinary New York's Bethesda fountain, world: she watching the New York Giants whose problems are turned to advantage while I was watching the African hippos. eg a beating system that is so archaic that There was also the purely practical problem cracks let escaping steam form romantic white clouds rising above the streets.

Manhattan is roughly the size of cumstances were they to return my calls, lest. Guernsey, yet in that small space it crams the girlfriend answer. So I had a series of in more than 30 major museums, bundreds rushed and hushed telephone conversitions of restaurants, 43 theatres, scores of comedy venues and more bars and night clubs than it's possible to count. With a catchment area of millions - on Manhattan Island alone - there is a fair amount of competition for

New York weekends: the fast facts

New York weekends: the even faster facts

few pounds more.

nights in a Manhartan hotel.

inevitably goes up - but only by (3).

then have been on opposite sides of the but you can't belp looking kindly on a place top-hat-and-tails tap show; it's what they call boofing - the bad boy generation meets Gene Kelly in an amazing dance show about the history of black rhythm music.

Our first serious mission was to book ourselves up for the remaining evenings. New it through an agent. You can get theatre listthough at a price.

You can expect to pay £60-£70 for a top-

Photograph: Hose Azel/Aurora

York, we reasoned, is home to Broadway, it is the like New Yor Time Out magazine, and Broadway is home to the musical. The public weekly in the UK. If you don't hottest ticket in town is Chicago in fact, it mine titesting for a few hours, and aren't turned out to be too hot for us to find any transfer is a half-price ticket booth in Times Square for tickets sold on the day of the performance.

Apart from the big-name musicals there's Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway, and gem of a show. Stumbling out of a cellar bar, laden with shopping, we came across Tubes by the Blue Man Group - musical meets performance art. At the end of the show we and the rest of the audience were wrapped together in toilet paper while still sitting in our seats - which at least ensures a close - if not

altogether romantic - end to the evening. If being bound in Andrea doesn't suit you, there's the more laid-back charm of the Village, where we listened to soulful jazz at Sweet Basil, wandered round small shops buying hand-made cards, and drank coffee in small corner cafés. And, for a bit of handson experience, we visited Our Name Is Mud - a pottery shop where in addition to selling professionally made pots they allow you to make your own clay souvenir of a New York surprise.

Adam Shaw is a presenter of BBC2's Working Lunch'. He has just published a book with Lorraine Chase, called 'Money and How to Make More of It'.



CALDER

Message for Gordon Brown: your predecessor as chancellor, Ken Clarke, has stung air travellers for around £1.5bn in tax since he introduced Air Passenger Duty in 1994. You doubled the tax last November - since when the number of British travellers flying abroad has increased. (That visitors to the UK have to pay £10 or £20 to leave the country is another issue - but the consultant Deloitte and Touche says the tax deters half a million would-be

tourists to Britain.) We outbound travellers' must appear so soft a touch; that you are, no doubt, sorely tempted to add yet more to the cost of air travel in Tuesday's Budget. I fear that even though the speech takes place on St Patrick's Day, you may not stop short of increasing taxes to Ireland and elsewhere in Europe. But may I suggest a compromise, as just announced by your counterpart in Norway?

From April, the country will charge a £12 tax for every aircraft seat - whether or not it is filled. If a passenger cannot be found to occupy the place (and pay the tax), the airline has to cough up. Other governments charge only for seats that are filled. Norway's splendidly simple measure is designed to cut waste by persuading airlines to match the number of flights more closely to demand. At present, a scheduled airline that fills seven out of 10 of its seats is doing well; in other words, three out of every 10 flights world-wide are unnecessary.

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The airlines are squealing about added costs, and no doubt fear that the concept will spread. But people who use charter flights need not fear increased fares; these are usually operated completely full, as we who have endured the 27-hour Melbourne to Manchester charter operated by Austravel know all too

From France comes news of another tempting tax: on holiday brochures. Fed up with the enormous waste of these glossy publications, the French government has started to tax the holiday companies that produce them. In Britain, around 140 million brochures are produced every year - about five for every foreign holiday.

Vietnam touches travellers for 10,000 dong (about £4) for domestic flights - though judging by the list of exceptions you'd be unlucky to ecd up paying. Neil Taylor of Regent Holidays in Bristol found himself booking a client on a domestic flight from Danang, when the reservations computer came up with this list of exclusions:

"Vietnam government leaders and accompanying persons, official guests of the Vietnam Government and Communist Party of Vietnam, officials and employees of embassies, consulates and United Nations agencies in Vietnam.

Don't give up yet; the list continues: "Vietnam's hero mothers, war invalids of Vietnam's army with blindness. without arms/ legs or more serious disabilities, stretcher and wheelchair passengers, infants and children under transit passengers and cabia crew on duty."

GREEN CHANNEL:

Leaving the car behind

This week the Today programme reported the astounding discovery that, if you restrict road space, some drivers will switch to public transport or not make their journeys at all. At least some tourist attractions in Britain are aiming to cut down on ear-borne visitors.

Gibson Mill is a National Trust property in West Yorkshire which, at the turn of the century, was an "entertainments emporium" complete with dance hall and rollerskating rink. The Trust is working to

provide sustainable visitor facilities including catering, lavatories and space for information, education and community use - without using any mains services. The Mill has never had mains services: its power is from renewable energy sources - hydroelectric, solar and biomass - and a 1927 turbine is being restored. Dry compost lavatories will be installed. local spring water supplies will be tapped. When refurbishments are complete, most visitors will be obliged to walk from the entrance to the property, a distance of more

than a mile. (An exception will be made for the less able.)

Farther south east, the Earth Centre near Doncaster is promising reduced-rate admission to anyone who can demonstrate that they have arrived at the former colliery by public transport, or under their own

The drawback is that you will have to wait a year for these commendable Yorkshire ventures to

EUROBEAT: BUDAPEST

The origins of the Budapest spring festival, which continues until 29 March, pre-date the collapse of Communism, but for travellers the joy of capitalism is simple: if you decide today to attend, you can hop on the oext plane out (if you can find a seat) without needing

Getting there: London-New York is the busiest and most competitive International air

route in the world, and since the start of this year fares have fallen to their lowest ever

in real terms. At present the best deals are on Air India (daily from Heathrow to JFK),

selling through discount agents for £160-£170 return. Fares on other airlines cost only a

The world's only supersonic aircraft has been flying the north Atlantic for 22 years. When

the first US-bound Concorde took off from Heathrow, the fare was £431 return. The stand-

ard British Airways supersonic return fare has now risen to close on £6,000. Yet break-

ing the speed of sound to New York can cost just a quarter of that - and include two

ly service to JFK. The French airline is obliged to discount fares heavily by packaging them

as part of weekend breaks to Manhattan. Before the end of March, Bridge Travel (01992.

456(76) will fly you out, club class, from your local airport (Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glas-

gow, London, Manchester or Southampton) to Paris. The next segment, to New York, is

in economy. But the journey home is in Concorde from JFK to Paris, with the last leg in

club. For all this, you pay a 542. The offer reappears in July and August, when the price

The reason is that Air France has even more trouble than BA in filling seats on its dai-

For 40 years, though, state sponsorship of the arts has done the city proud. The wedding-cake State Opera House offers a Simon Colder festival whose highlights are like-

ly to be the evenings devoted to from Heathrow to Budapest the local heroes Zoltan Kodaly and (around £200 if you stay over a Bela Bartok

Amid all the official events, it is worth searching out some de facto Fringe festivities. Dotted around the Hungarian capital are all manner of small clubs and community centres, with busy programmes of everything from jazz to Romany music. The local listings magazines, Budapest Week and

Budapest Sun, contain details. The independent way to get there is to get a discounted flight

(around £200 if you stay over a Saturday night). Private rooms and botels are readily available and cheap. The Foreign Office warned this week, however, of "lateevening overcharging. accompanied by threats of violence, by certain clubs and bars in

For more information, contact the Hungarian National Tourist Office, 46 Eaton Place, London SW1X 8AL (0171-823 1032).

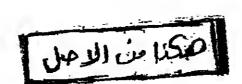
Budapest".



Now you can afford to take the whole squad to France this summer.



Supersever bookings must be made I day in advance and by the 31st March 1998.



48 hours



See it, hear it, taste it - but don't believe it. Pascal Wyse offers a guide to America's most neurotic city

Why go now?

The stars are coming out at night in the run-up to the Oscars, the weather bas a certain sanity to it, and prices - both in terms of getting there and being there hre very much "off peak".

London-Los Angeles is the second-busiest route across the Atlantic, after London-New York. bas a strange cinematic famil-Five airlines fly oon-stop: Air jarity-a living set teeming with New Zealand, American, British Airways, United and Virgin Atlantic; another airline, Cootinental, has an allocation of seats on Virgin's flights.

Seats are being sold at absurdly low fares. Expect to pay PE250-£280 through discount agents for travel between April watch out for the buildingand June. If you are prepared to change planes en route, you could get there and back for even less. Business class seats Baywatch crowd. Depending are available for £3,000 or less. . on which mode of transport you

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manne transport aut tres

From LAX airport, at the centre of LA's west coast, Venice Beach makes a good first stop - given the vast distances devoured by the city. Many of the botels oear the beach have special deals with mini-van services from the airport, which keeps the cost of the trip down to around \$5 per person. The Cadillac Hotel (310-399 8876) has everything from four-person dorms to a private suite - from \$30 double. Spilling straight out on to the beach, this classic 1930s Art Deco building is a good taste of things to come.

If you're looking to stay up in Hollywood, head for the boulevard of the same oame, The Magic Hotel, just off the boulevard at Manns Chinese Theater, 7025 Franklin Avenue (213-851 0800) has enormous rooms with kitchens from \$50 for a double.

Get your bearings Greater Los Angeles covers some 8,000 square miles, so you must divide to conquer. Infamously described as "72 suburbs in search of a city", it has been stretched over its desert foundations by a network of freeways and stretched with it is the car-

obsessed Angelinos' perceptioo of distances. Strictly speaking, the "city" of Los Angeles is small: but it is the surrounding districts - Santa Monica, Hollywood, Venice Beach, Malibu, Beverly Hills - that carry much of the city's fame.

Take a hike (or a bike) Like much of LA, Venice Beach everything from the odd Hollywood legend on a pushbike to a colourful cast of extras walking their parrots, selling drunken stories by the dollar or performing bard-sell pizza soliloquies. Amongst the Bohemian stalls and street art. sized dumbbell that signifies Muscle Beach, where weighty issues are grunted over by the your way right up the coast

rental shops along the way. It's a straight journey along the coast, but make sure you detour behind the beachfront to take in Venice, where a few silted canals remain of the Italianate pastiche dreamed up by Abbot Kinne in 1905.

through Santa Monica and up

to the millionaire pads on Mal-

way, pick up a bike (for around

\$10 a day) from one of the

Lunch on the move

At the end of the walk, capture a full LA view from the big wheel at Santa Monica Pier before beading inland up Santa Monica Boulevard to 3rd Street Promenade, where you can sample everything that's de rigueur în California's fad factory-from family meals for one to fat-free mountains. Go to Wolfgang Puck Express (don't speak with your mouth full), at No 1315 for famous cheap American grub, especially the Caesar salad

Saturday matinée "Hollyweird" has long disguised its seediness with the glamour of the film industry, and those

who are really "oo the money"

live in the ocarby hills with the -a quintessential catery, as seen have settled for, you can work a bus up Santa Monica Boulevard for Hollywood (40 minvibrancy. Manns Chinese Theibu Beach. If you flag along the ater is a perfect place to get into the movie business. This enormous cinema, a combination of

glamorous location for opening nights. Outside, the hands and feet (not to mention cigars) of Hollywood greats are imprint-If you want to get into the underwear of the stars, peel off farther west to the Lingerie lywood (6608 Hollywood Boulevard) - a proud purpleand-pink monument to kitsch.

Window shopping

The famous Universal Studios tour is a day in itself, but Universal City Walk (1000 Universal Centre Drive) provides a shorter blast of the same plastic-fantastic feel. Consume the the preposterous shop façades - a 27-ft gorilla, a Chevy crashed in mid air, the neon guitar of a missing giant - rather than the trendy clutter inside.

The sunset burger diner at 8585 Sunset Boulevard manicured groves of Forest Forties to the present day, in-

famous big white letters. Catch in George Lucas's American Graffiti. Slide into a booth, drop a dime into the table-top utes) to absorb the downbeat juke-box, and order perfectioo Night-life fake Buddhist temple and Art terior of West Hollywood lie

Behind the deceptively quiet ex-Deco, opened in 1927 as a some of LA's most lively and infamous clubs. The Viper Rooms (hang-oot for Johnny Depp and the late River Phoenix), 8852 Sunset Boulevard, Whisky ed in the surrounding concrete. a Go Go (which opened doors for the Doors) and Trader Vics (9876 Wilshire Boulevard) have been mixing a range of 200 Museum in Fredericks of Hol- cocktails since 1955. For a more compact mile of entertainment, and some of LA's famous comedy circuit, try Sunset Strip (Sunset Boulevard, either side of La Cienega Boulevard) and

Sunday morning: pay your

ican art form, the billboard.

eyeball the best of a very Amer-

"They've great respect for the dead in Hollywood," Errol Flynn once said, "but none for the living." Even in death, in LA you just have to be seen in the right place with the right people. Tour the tombstone credits of Chico Marx, Clark Gable ... can be found at Mels 24-hour and Flynn himself, among the

in Evelyn Waugh's The Loved you a flavour of the ostentatious clamouring for rememturf for a while, take in a more Angeles. cosmic view from oearby Griffith park, home to the Griffiths Swing out of town observatory (where James In Mildred Pierce, when Joan

Bracing brunch Canter's Deli. 419 N Fairfax Avenue (213-651 2030) is a 24hour kosher deli and diner,

with beautiful sandwiches the size of burst mattresses. Cultural afternoon down-But what do LA's artists make of the place? Duck under-

ground into the Museum of Contemporary Art, California Plaza, 250 S Grand Avenue, and its partner, the Geffen Contemporary, a few blocks away at 152 N Central Avenue (known as the Temporary Contemporary, because of its flexible and slightly makeshift warehouse building). Challenging the moootony of the surrounding financial district, the building by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki - displays art from the

Lawn Cemetry at 1712 South cloding permanent works by Glendale Avenue, as satirised Jackson Pollock, Piet Moodrian and Alberto Giacometti. One. A brief sojourn will give The Temporary is currently bousing Elusive Paradise, a fas-· cinating and comprehensive brance. Having gazed at the survey of post-war art in Los

Someone to

watch over

- and their

city - have a

keeping things

in proportion

hard time

Photographs:

Grandadam

Sylvain

me: Angelians

Dean was a rebel without a Crawford said "People have to drink somewhere; why oot here?" she was standing at the huge, oval bar of the Derby, the engine room of LA's swingdancing scene. On Sunday night at 4500 Los Feliz Boulevard you can take on Jumpin Jimes's swing-dance lessoo (8pm-9pm) and show off your moves to bands such as Lee and the Press-on Nails and Ingrid and the Flying Neutrinos. Once incompetently flat on your back. admire the wooden dome ceiling, which used to have water running down it as an early form of air-conditioning.

CHECK OUT

A plane

No coupon-clipping, promises Virgin Atlantic (01293 747230), for its latest deal. The airline is undercutting the fares offered by British Airways in a promotion with two newspapers. For £183.40 return, Virgin will fly you from Gatwick to Boston or Heathrow to Washington DC. You must book by next Tuesday, 17 March, and complete travel by the end of May.

A boat

The first voyage of P&O Stena Line between Dover and Calais set sail on Tuesday. The two largest ferry operators on the Channel have teamed up because of competition from the Timnel, with Le Shuttle now taking more than half the traffic.

The new company plans to have a ferry available for immediate boarding at all times between 8am and midnight David Mott, passenger shipping correspondent for Lloyd's List, predicts that fares could rise by 10 per cent in the coming year as a result of the merger.

Upgrade to first class on Saturday or Sunday with Midland Mainline on the line linking Leeds, Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and London. Using the "4-sight" return fare (£34 for four), and each paying an extra £6 each way, a group of four could travel first class from Sheffield to Loodon and back for £20.50 each. Call 0345 125678.

A room

One Devonshire Gardens is both the address and the name of Glasgow's most exclusive hotel. Receots guests include David Bowie and Sting. The weekend special rate is £125 per night (dooble), oot including breakfast. Reservations: 0141-339 2001.

The best place to start the day at Heathrow Airport is the bus-station café, with a complete breakfast for £3.99.

A three-bour driving ban and a fine of BF5,000 (£100) is the penalty facing drivers in Belgium whose alcohol/blood level is in the 0.05-0.08 per cent range. The Belgian Tourist Office warns "two glasses of Belgian lager will get you to that limit". Above 0.08 per cent the penalties are disqualification and a beavy fine (up to £8,000).

A week from now ...

... the Francophooe world comes to Britain with the Smaart '98 travel. tourism and culture exhibition. Besides organisations from the Scychelles National Tourism Office to Royal Air Maroc, the exhibition features music, theatre and dancing. It takes place next Saturday, 21 March, at the TUC Congress Centre in Great Russell Street, London WC1 (10.30am-6pm). Tickets, price £5, are available on the door or in advance from 0171-978 6846.

A month from now ...

... you should make tracks for Holland. for National Museum Weekend (18-19 April) when about 450 of the country's museums are open free or at a reduced rate. Netherlands Board of Tourism: 0891 717777 (a premium-rate oumber). A deal from Eurostar (0345 303030) will take you from London Waterloo or Ashford, via Brussels, to any statioo in Holland for £84 return.

A year from now Airtours (08701 577775) will take you from Manchester to the Maldives for £648, with half board at the Meeru Island Resort. Discos, you may be glad to learn, are described as "occasional".

Prices are per person based on 2 people sharing and includes return flights from London. All inclusive accommodation, airport taxes and transfers. Please refer to British Airways Holidays Worldwide 2nd edition brochure for full list of facilities included. Subject to availability for travel between 12th April and 30th June. For full details see ITV Teletext p380 or your travel agent.

For these and other great offers please call:

0990 224 224 Mon-Sac 8.30am-8.30pm, Sun 9.30am-5.00pm

BRITISH AIRWAYS HOLIDAYS

Train Deluxe & Cruise to Marrakesh visiting Paris, Lake Lucerne, Cote d'Azur, Menorca, Malaga for Granada, Cadiz for Jerezand Seville, Casablanca,

and a few days at the 4-star Atlas Hotel including Eurostar, the Train de Grand Vitesse. the Nostalgic Orient Express & a cruise on board the Swiss-managed MS Switzerland

This wonderful journey makes use of three great trains, the Eurostar to Paris, the Train de Grand Vitesse to the Alps, and across the Alps to Lake Maggiore by Nostalgic Orient Express. It's then onwards across the Mediterranean on board the Swiss-managed MS Swithediterranean on board the Swiss-managed MS Swiss-managed MS Swiss-managed MS Swiss-managed MS Swiss-man zerrand calling at the Cote of Azur, the island of Menorca, Malaga for the visit to Granada, Cadiz for the visit to Jerez and Seville, Casablanca where we disembark for a visit of the city and onwards towards the Atlas Moun-tains for a few days in Marrakesh and the return flight to London Galwick.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Day 1 Depart Waterloo by Eurostar to Paris. Spend two nights at the 5-star Nikko Hotel. Day 3 Depart by TGV to nights at the Serial of Nikko Hotel. Day 3 Depart by the Nostalgic Drei Konige or similar. Day 5 Depart by the Nostalgic Orient Express to Lake Maggiore and onwards to the Coted Azur to join the MS Switzerland for our 5-night cruiss. Day 6 Reach Mahon - Menorca. Day 7 at sea. Day 8 Reach Malon - Menorca. Day 7 at sea. Day 8 Reach Malon - Menorca. Day 10 Reach Cadiz for 8 Reach Malon Day 10 Reach Casabianca - visit city and onwards to the 4-star Atlas in Marrakesh for three and onwards to the 4-star Atlas in Marrakesh for three nights. Day 13 Return by air to Gatwick.



DEPARTURE DATE & PRICES Wednesday 20th May, 1998 Run-of-the-Ship prices: Lower inside £795 Lower outside £895 - Middle outside £995

Upper Outside £1095 - Upper Outside Superior £1195 Single add 40% to the above prices. Supplement first class Eurostar and TGV £85. Inclusions: 5-star hotel in Paris, 4-star in Marcalesh and 3-star in Lu-

odybasis, full board on cruise, port charges, airport lates, rostar, TVV, Nostalatic Orient Express, local guides. Not see, tips, share excussions, Our current Conditions of Book-0171-6161000

VOYAGES JULES VERINE 21 Dorset Square, London NW 1 6GG netions Ltd. ABTAV1661 ATOLSSEE

LA: AS FAR HOLLYWOOD

Billy Urke: "To survive there, you need the ambitioo of a Latin American revolutionary, the ego of a grand opera tenor and the physical stamina of a cow pony."

Walter Winchell: "A town that has to been to be dishelieved."

Joe Frisco: "The only town in the world where you can wake up in the morning and listen to the birds coughing in the trees "

Stephen Vincent Benet: "Of all the Christbitten places in the two bemispheres, this is the last curly kink in the pig's tail."

The treasures of

Tutankhamun in

Dorset? Yes, as

good as, complete

with animal-headed

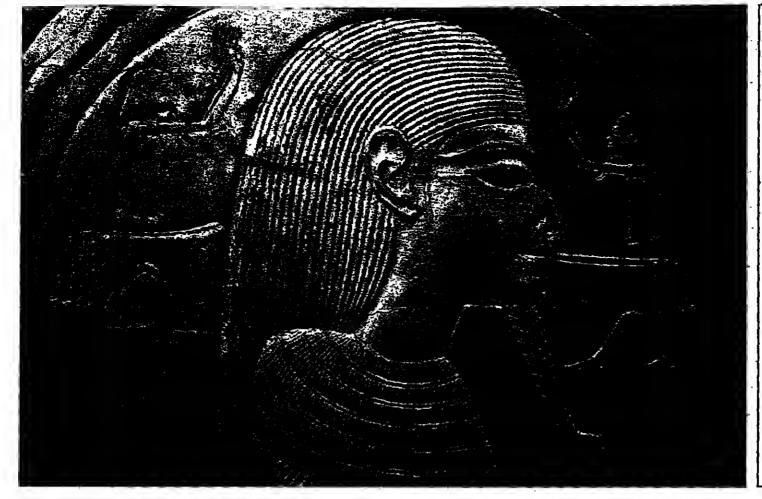
gods and realistic

Emma Haughton

goes tomb raiding

for a family visit

smells.



WHERE ELSE TO SEE EGYPT IN BRITAIN

The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London (0171-636 1555) holds one of the most comprehensive Egyptian collections outside Cairo, with mummies, sculpture, paintings, inscribed and writteo documents, metalwork, pottery, textiles and jewellery. However, development work may result in some areas being closed. Admission free: small charge for some temporary exhibitions. Open 10am-5pm, Monday to Saturday, 2.30-6pm Sundays. (Closed 10 April, 4 May, 24-26 December, 1 January)

Manchester Museum, University of Manchester (0161 2752634). Two permanent displays of Egyptian artefacts. As well as jewellery and more mummies, visitors can see items used in ancient Egyptian homes. There is a temporary display of Egyptian clothing and costumes. Admission free. Open 10am-5pm, Monday to Sanaday

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (01223 332900). The department of antiquities has an impressive collection of Egyptian objects, including mummies of young men.

Small children are welcome, and baby slings and harnesses are provided; pushchairs and prams are not allowed. Family activity sheets are available. The museum welcomes disabled people. but suggests they phone in advance to ensure a successful visit. (01223 332900/37). Admission free. Open 10am-5pm Tuesday to Saturday, 2.15pm-5pm on Sundays. Closed on Good Friday open again on Easter Monday

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (01865 278000). Home to Oxford University's world-famous collection of archaeology, and in the Egyptian collection visitors can gaze at bronze statuettes, objects of faience, amulets, beads and pendants. There are also wall paintings, glass vessels, papyrus scrolls, canopic jars from Egyptian tombs, and mummified figures. Admission free. Open 10am-4pm Tuesday to Saturday, 2pm-4pm Sundays. Closed for Easter, 10-12 April, reopens Easter

Monday, 2pm-4pm Sarah-Jane Wakefield

The Pharaoh of Dorchester

ever made. This exhibition was put nal artefacts prompted the Egyptian government to cease foreign exhibitions, so it replicates (most faithfully) the ancient loot that attracted such

huge crowds in the Seventies. The high point is an atmospheric mock-up of the young king's antechamber and tomb. As you walk in, your senses are assailed by herbal smells that recall the uoguents and aromatic oils used in the original tomb, and by the voluptuous heauty of the treasure it cootained. The suggested that the boy king suffered antechamber shows exactly how a long slow death at the hands of his these riches were arranged when chief adviser). Beyond the spine-tin-

likely setting for Egyptian treasure, er there was space, giving the air of some photos of Tutankhamun's ago. but the Tutankhamuo exhibitioo in a musty and forgotteo corner of an Dorchester, Dorset, offers a compact exclusive junk shop. The hurial yet fascinating tribute to one of the chamber itself is dominated by the greatest archaeological discoveries huge gold coffin, captured at the moment that Carter first opened it up together when damage to the origi- to reveal the famous gold mask covering the bandaged mummy.

There are plenty of other exhibits and information on the treasure, including the Rosetta stone and its role in the discovery of the tomb to a fascinating account of the political machinations that rumhled on behind the throne, and may well have led to Tutankhamun's death by murder at the teoder age of 18 (though receot research by Professor Robert Brier, of Long Island University, has

nes Cook Holidays, Freepost (PE1(195), PO Box 300, Peter

mummified remains, and a life-size mock-up of his body. Having got their attention, the surrounding displays then get in a bit of education by the back door, covering each stage of the 70 days it took to embalm the

body and prepare it for burial. Some of the most speciacular exhibits are the painstaking replicas of the jewellery and other objects that accompanied the king - the opulent solid gold collars, the richly decorated peodants and amulets and, most famous of all, the gold mask which came to epitomise this most romantic of all discoveries for the w. rld.

But it's perhaps the religious figures - the jackal Anubis, god of emhalming; Hathor, the cow-headed goddess; and the hawks symbolic of Howard Carter first broke into it in gling atmosphere of the tomb itself. show, their eerie and inscrutable see it's fun for the younger ones as were around a long, long time ago.

1922: curiously, they seem oot so there's a good dose of yuck factor for majesty still as potent today as it well, especially the minimified body. They built mud houses and Pyramids,

The visitors Lisa Faiers took her three children, Ned, seven, Monty, five, and Archie, I think, if I go again, I'll go over

Lisa: I've been to the exhibition once better prepared about things like how before, and both times I've thor- a mummy is made. oughly enjoyed it. What I liked best was having all the aromas and the noise in the tomb; it really feels as if you're in there. All in all, the at- It smells horrible, and the music mosphere feels authentic. I'm sure it's scared me, but the rest didn't. I liked the next best thing to going to Egypt, the willy on the murnmy, the goldin fact, it made me feel I wanted to en chair in the tomb and the people

I could have done with several hours of peace and quiet to take it all in It's maybe better for older children, mask which was an Egyptian head, who can read all the information that's and I liked the goldeo dog. the god Horus - that steal the on offer, but, having said that, I can

A rural county town may seem an un-much displayed as dumped wherev-the kids, including some rather grue-must have been ocarly 3,000 years -although it's cot a real mummy. But and they had flat teeth because Medallion man: detail from don't take the kids unless they're oldenough and brave enough to cope with that, along with being spooked by the

> some of the information about Egypt. with the boys beforehand, so they are

Monty: The scariest bit was the tomb. It was really dark and spooky. go and see the real thing for myself. with the stabbers - I think they're called spears. They were golden. I liked the person who had a whole

The Egyptians were people who

sand and stones blew into their bread from the desert. I wouldn't really want to live in Egypt, though, because I'd be dead by now.

Nect: I tiked seeing the treasures and looking at the mask. It was a sort of golden face with a long blue beard, but I'm not sure he looked like that in real life. It was exciting to see the mummified body. His teeth and toes were all white where you could see the bones sticking out. The pretend tomb

was good, too; it was really smelly. I really like the Egyptians. They lived in Egypt most of the time and they liked treasures, and they didn't like killing animals - in fact they worshipped snakes and scarab beetles. Tutankhamun was an Egyptian king but he was only 18 when he died. I really enjoyed it at the exhibition and it made me think I'd quite like to go

Tutankhamun's tomb Photograph: Axiom

The deal Getting there: the Tutankhamun

Exhibition (01305 269571) is in High Street West in Dorchester town ceotre. Opening times: daily 9.30am-

5.30pm, except for three days at Christmas. Admission: adults £3.50, children

over five £2.25. A family ticket for two adults and two children costs £9.95. Facilities: There is a well stocked shop, including books covering every aspect of ancient Egyptian civilisation and all kinds of Egyptian paraphernalia, activities and novelties for both childreo and adults,

Access: A ramp enables wheelchairs to negotiate two steps; thereafter the exhibition is on the flat.

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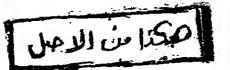
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continues

on page 6.

Parting shots



Selecting the third and final tranche of photographs from The Independent/Wanderfust/Nikon Travel Photograph of the Year competition has been almost as agonising as being gored during an Andalucian buil run. Forty photographs were highly commended by the judges, but only a few can appear here. We have chosen three images in which the photographer has been working close to the limit.

Colin Woods' shot of the west face of the Aiguille de Plan in the French Alps (below right) shows the rewards of testing the limits of endurance. The painful instant (left) that Jim Sherwood captured at the town of Vejer de la Frontera one Easter Sunday was achieved by pushing for the best vantage point as well as technical perfection. Paul Franklin's wideeyed picture of a young mountain gorilla in Burundi, meanwhile, tested the limits of mutual respect between subject and photographer.

Our competition has proved such a success that it will be run again this year. Look out for details in The Independent and Wanderlust magazine in the autumn; for a subscription to Wanderhust, call 01753 620426





RED CHANNEL

In a major incident near Luxor on 17 November 1997, gunmen killed 58 tourists, Including six British - - ·

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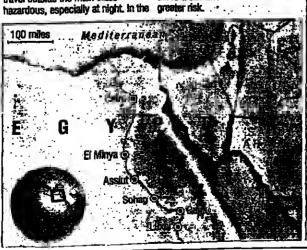
Since 1992 extremists have conducted a campaign of violence against the Egyptian government, mainly in the provinces of Minya and Assiut (half-way between Cairo and Luxor) but with sporadic attacks in other areas. Most of these incidents have been directed at the police, or were sectarian in

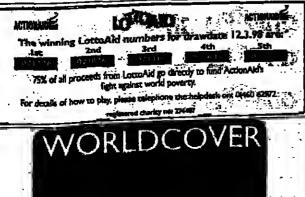
In April 1996 gunmen killed 18 Greek tourists in Cairo. On 18 September 1997, two men, acting alone, killed 10 people, mainly German tourists, also in Calro. Since the Luxor incident extremist groups have threatened further attacks against tourists; these threats should be taken seriously. Visitors to all parts of Egypt are advised to be vigilant, and to respect any advice from the local security authorities. Visitors are advised to exercise great caution when visiting the Nile Valley south of and including Minya

Local driving conditions and poor vehicle maintenance make road travel outside the main cities

(Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit, 0171-238 4503 or http://www.fco.gov.uk or see Ceefax on BBC2, p470 onwards)

... from the US State Department For the past several years, Egyptian extremist groups seeking to destablise the government have attacked targets in Egypt, Including Egyptian police, security officials and tourists. Most of these attacks have occurred in the Nile Valley provinces of Minya, Assiut, Sohag and Qena. There was one major attack in Cairo in 1996, and another In September 1997, in which tourists were targeted and killed. In November 1997, there was a major attack at a tourist site near Luxor in Upper Egypt, in which 58 tourists were killed. As a result of the attacks on tourists, Egyptian authorities have enhanced security measures to protect tourists in Egypt. Nevertheless, the potential for terrorist attacks exists, and American citizens should exercise caution throughout Egypt. Because the extremists have been more active in the Nile Valley governates of Minya, Assiut, Sohag, and Dene (north of Dena City),





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The massacre in Luxor last year, in which 58 tourists died, was a disaster for Egypt's tourist industry. But, as Douglas Hurd writes, the impressive security that now surrounds some of the most glorious sights in the world should encourage people to visit them - and soon, before the Sphinx, the Pyramids and the Valleys of the Kings and the Queens are once more heaving with crowds of tourists

"When did you book this holiday?"

"Just a day or two after the terrorist shootings. We thought anc 3d won bluow roxal tant of the safest places in the world to take a boliday." In the spring sunshine, ex-

ploring the Valley of the Queens, astounded once again by the huge pillars at Karnak, and walking the elegant, empty corridors of the Winter Palace Hotel, it was hard to disagree with my former constituents. I was there with an American and an Italian colleague to look at the security precautions which the Egyptians put in place after the shooting of tourists in Luxor last November. We visited the three sites that attract the greatest number of tourists: the Pyramids and the Sphinx; the Egyptian museum in Cairo. and Luxor. We can say nothing about other sites, and of course no one can guarantee safety at any site, but we were impressed by the thoroughness

sacked his minister of the interior, the governor of Luxor, and others whom he held respousible for the security failure last November. New, brisk, fectiveness after six or 12 1974 to 1997.

"Hello, Mr Hurd. We're from serious men have heen installed in their place. Each of the sites now has a security plan including control of access, completely new systems of patrolling, unity of command and communications, and new attention to the quality and training of the securi-

> At first the remaining tourists complained that the security presence was too oppressive. So the sharp-shooters have been removed from obvious positions, and you have to look carefully at the hillsides to spot them and the small tents which are their homes. It is reassuring rather than alasming to see camel patrols of armed police moving in line among the

dunes behind the Pyramids. It was a strange experience to be briefed in one ear by a lady archaeologist about the latest discoveries, and simultaneously in the other ear by the police the Egyptians were to receive

In our report to the new minof the Egyptian reaction to that ister of the interior, we emphasised above all the need for President Mubarak at once consistency. It is one thing to have in place new systems and another to maintain those sys-

ideas from outside.

months without further incident. Staleness leads to slackness, to the cutting of corners, to a lapse back into the dozy ways of the past.

The Egyptians have made an impressive effort. They know that they have to regain confidence in the security of the main tourist attractions if they are to save the livelihoods of the thousands of Egyptians whose jobs depend on visitors. At the moment Luxor is an

amazingly attractive place to visit, without crowds, without noise. The Egyptians hope that the crowds will return. Their success will depend on constant testing and supervision of the men and methods now in place. The second British couple I met in Luxor came from Leeds.

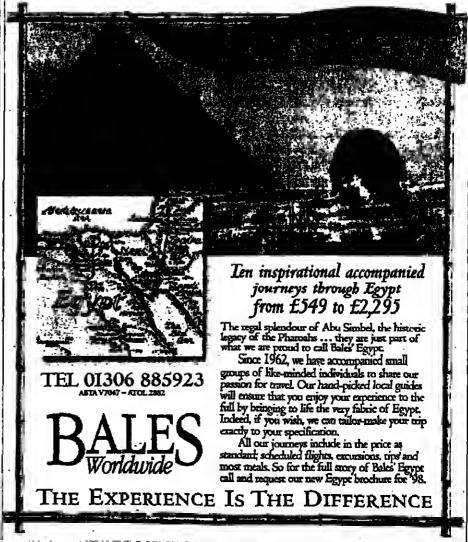
This was the fifth visit which the mother had made to what she considers the most extraordi-nary sight in the world. "Now at last I understand

general about his security plan. what Mum's been going on We were struck by how ready about all these years," said the daughter. That is the reaction which

the Egyptians hope for. They deserve luck, and will above all need persistence to keep it

new men to execute them. It is Lord Hurd is a former foreign secretary, and was MP for East Oxtems and those men in full ef- fordshire, and later Witney, from





There's more to skiing than screaming down the black runs and scaring the life out of your nearest and dearest. David Bowen took a gentler route across country - and . found a few natural bonuses along the way

The ibex is a strange beast, with great, curving horns almost as long as its stumpy legs. Though it was on a ledge on the mountainside opposite, and we had no bin-oculars, there was no mistaking those horns. We tramped back through the forest, following a path trodden in the snow by some maniacs who were climbing frozen waterfalls farther up the valley. We passed a couple of elderly locals, the first people we had seen for an hour. They lent us their binoculars and, yes, there was the ibex with its horns. Funny looking things, ibexes.

The funnier thing was that we were supposed to be on a skiing holiday.

We were indeed on a skiing holiday but not the sort where we and 1,000 others went up a mountain slowly and came down it fast. This was cross-country skiing, the gentle cousin of downhill.

One of its advantages is that you can, if you want, take off your skis and go ibexspotting instead. No pressure, no lift queues- and shoes that are more like comfy trainers than Neil Armstrong's number 12s.

Cross-country sking is the original form of skiing - indeed, it was the only form un-100 years or so ago. It has many names: cross-



The flat of the land

developed into a sport with at least some of the trappings of the downhill jobby.

We were staying in Cogne, in the Aosta Valley - not much known among downhill skiers (though there is a cable car, and some of the emptiest pistes in Christendom), but a great centre for cross-country skiing. The day after we left, 1,300 skiers were to take part in the Marcia Gran Paradiso, a 45-km slog to the ends of three valleys, then back markably few British people have - printo the centre. The ski trails were hardly crowded, but most of the people we did see were in full, Lycra-clad training mode. My wife and I felt like a couple of Morris Mitil some plucky Brits built the first ski lifts nors that had strayed on to a practice session at Silverstone - but the Ferraris were country, langlauf, ski de fond and - here in good humoured, hopping out of the pre-

just a way of getting about, but in Italy it has out any opprohrious (or, at least, audibly cause Italy is a rather safer bet than but not exhausting. The equipment was deopprobrious) comments.

We had chosen to go cross-country skiing because we wanted to ski but were of nice surprise was that after the first day, a quite different standards downhill, so would not otherwise have spent much time point of somnolence: a real Alpine village together. We decided, slightly nervously, to ignore those who told us that cross-country at weekends, when cars with Turin numwas the most exhausting sport there is: none ber plates pour in. We spent hours sitting of our informants had in fact tried it. Recipally, I suspect, because it is not offered by any of the big travel companies. I eventually tracked down Inntravel, an admirably efficient operation in York that specialises in slightly offbeat holidays, and had a number of cross-country options.

We chose Cogne mainly because it part of the kingdom of Savoy. Italy - sci nordico. In some places it is still pared tracks and whooshing past us with- looked pretty in the brochure, but also be- Thirdly, the skiing was gently puffing, aster. Uphill involves "herringboning", or For snow reports, see page 19

France for vegetarians (of whom my wife is one). It all worked beautifully. The first Sunday, Cogne became peaceful almost to rather than a ski resort. It gets crowded only in a bar inhabited by locals playing cards. We could have spent days.

Secondly, the food was excellent (few problems for a veggie), not least in the threebonus for non-Italian-speakers is that almost everyone in the Aosta valley speaks French - an inheritance from the time when it was

lightfully light compared with that for downhill skiing: the comfy shoes clipped at the front on to slim skis. We spent an hour with an instructor, which was plenty for the hasics. If you can walk, you can ski across country.

It is possible to ski on unprepared snow, but we stuck to the tracks, which are "bashed" daily. These are a combination of rail and road: you can either fit your skis into the twin grooves that run along each track, or you can go freestyle on the flat star Hotel Sant Orso where we stayed. A section. You are most likely to do the latter either if you are skilled enough to "skate", or if you need more control going up or down a hill.

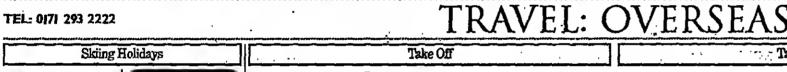
Hills are the only potential source of dis-

Cross-country skiing is the original form of the sport- indeed, it was the only form until some plucky Brits built the first ski lifts 100 years or so ago. In some places it is still just a way of getting about, but in Italy it has developed into a sport with at least some of the trappings of the downhill equivalent

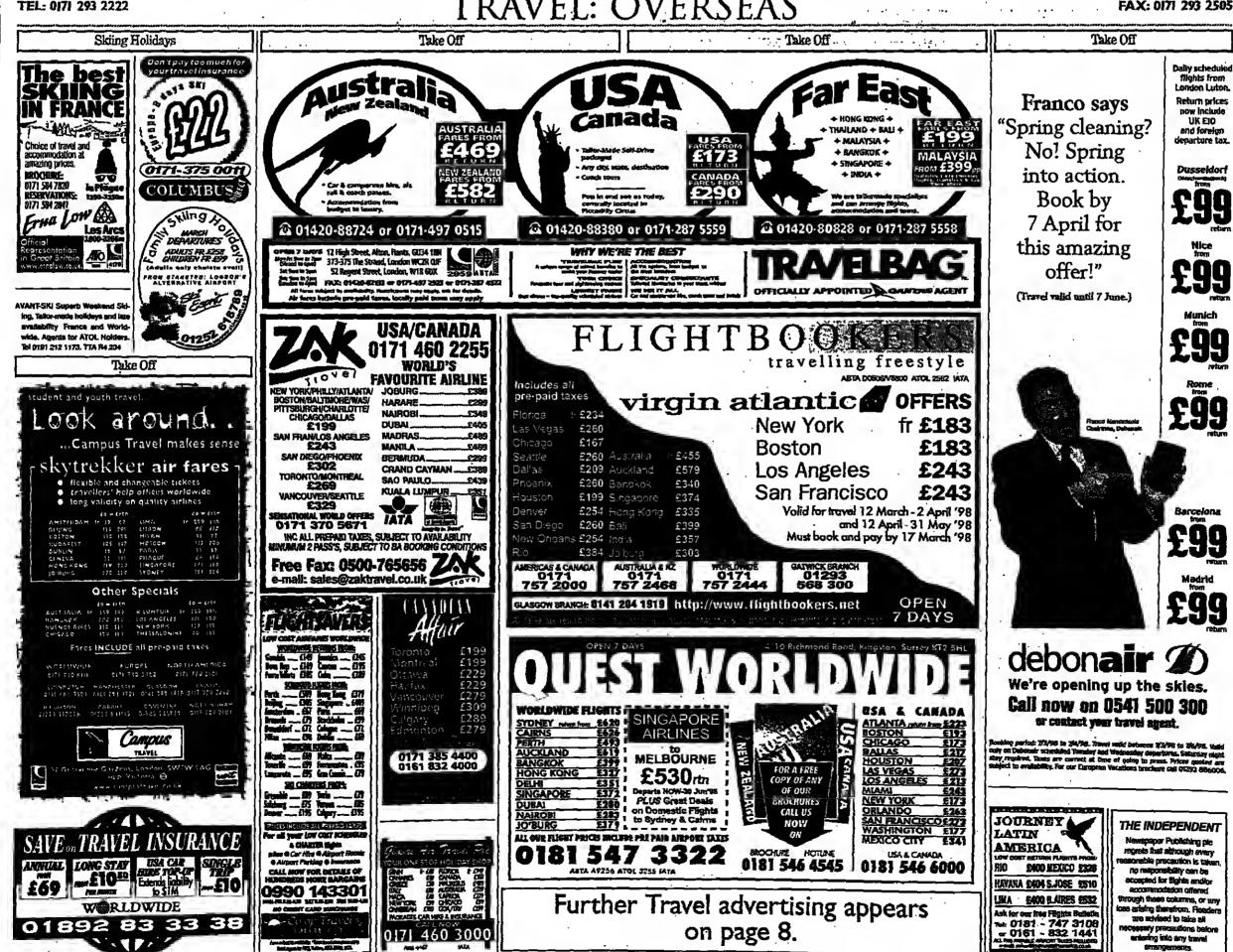
patting your skis in V formation and waddling - surprisingly, not too exhausting. Downhill requires variations on the snow plough - hut because the track can be narrow, anything more than a gentle incline can be alarming. At least you can take your skis off and walk.

In our week's skiing, we found only one seriously bothersome slope. It was worth it, though, because it led back into the village of Lillaz from the valley of Valleille beyond. This was a magical place - frozen waterfalls to either side, in the middle a bubbling stream straddled by wafer-thin hridges of ice, and complete silence. Well, almost complete: the occasional Ferrari whooshed past, more intent on reaching the finishing line than staring ibex-hopefully at the crags. We looked for ibexes, we looked for chamois and we looked for golden eagles. During the week we saw them all - but then we were Morris Minors, oot Ferraris.

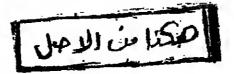
David Bowen paid £500 through Inntravel (01653 628811) for the week's cross-country skiing in Italy. The price included return flight to Geneva, train and taxi transfers and three-star, half-board accommodation.



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Wherever you look, there is work to be done: coppicing, ditch-digging, dry-stone walling, tree-planting. Duff Hart-Davies joins the volunteers on an unpaid, but rewarding, project

Who would be hrave enough to £20 for the privilege of putting aged by staff from the cat the Jew's ears? That was the in two days' work, and nobody question teasing the volunteers seemed dismayed by the basic when they pulled off the hill on nature of the lodgings. There Saturday evening, carrying hat- are, Ian explained, three levels fuls of the brown, rubbery fun- of accommodation for such gus which they had peeled from projects. "Luxury" means that the bark of elder bushes during their day's work.

young people who spent last ple", as at North Nibley, you sleep on the floor. weekeed toiling oe the steep southern slope of Cam Long Down, near Stroud, neder the auspices of the British Trust for the Berkeley vale at right angles Conservation Volunteers, had a from the main Cotswold esgood break in the country. The carpment - a long, high backweather stayed more or less dry. the site was a speciacular occ. the company cheerful: everyone to dam the Severn. More profelt that he or she had benefit- saic commentators reckon that ed from exercise in the open air it was carved by retreating glacand uchieved something worth-

The name of the Trust is arating views. too long, and its abhreviated form - BTCV - sounds uncomfortably like the initials of the limestoee grassland of the some televisioe company; hut upper slopes. By the time I it is an admirable organisation, joined the team on Saturday afand unobtrusively nchieves an ternoon they had already felled enormous amount in the an impressive number of elder countryside.

charge of the party was 24-year- f was equipped with gloves and old Ian Devon, who got a de- a bow-saw and set to work. gree in environmental science ut Bradford University, spent six morale was high. People months in Uganda, and then pegged away with their chosen found that nobody in England would give him a job because he clippers - and exchanged the had neither a master's degree nor two years' practical experience. His response was to become a full-time volunteer from Birmingham, Tom from down. They'd done their best officer with BTCV, and he is Bristol. Sanjida O'Connell, a with butter, salt, pepper and garnow working 50 or 60 hours a television producer, also from week for no pay. He it was who had inspect-

ed the work site, sharpened the comparative psychology of hutools, booked accommodation and bought food. He it was who met the party in Gloucester. drove them to their billet in the magpies. village hall at North Nibley, and

cooked supper. Each volunteer had paid

the establishment has beds. "Standard" probably has bunks, At the very least, the dozen as in a youth hostel, and in "Sim-

> Cam Long Down is a freestanding hill running out into boee dumped there (some say) by the Devil, in a futile attempt iers at the end of the last ice age. Either way, it commands exhil-

The weckeed's project was to clear scruh that had invaded and hawthorn hushes, and had Last weekend was typical.le a good fire hlazing. In seconds

If the pace was leisurely, weapons - hand saws, slashers, odd volley of banter. They had come from far and wide: Jane from London, a second Ian Bristol, is already, at 26, the author of three books, two on the man beings and animals, the end it tasted like old polythird n novel about a researcher who goes to Ireland to study

The top of Cam Long Down belongs to Stroud District Council, but the land is manWHAT, WHEN, WHERE

Fancy a glass of Cock Robin, a half of Old Tom and little light finger buffet? There's a waiting list, so put your name down now for a tour of the Unicorn Brewery, a family concern started in 1838 by William Robinson when he hought the Unicorn Inn in Stockport. After the tour

during which your guide will explain. the terms "mashing, "wort" and "rousing", you can sample the end product in the Unicorn Room. But be warned: there are lots of stairs and uneven surfaces in the

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty, and with us was

John Morris, the service's local

project officer. When we

downed tools for a cup of tea,

perching around a gas ring on

precipitous turf, he explained

that grazing by cattle or sheep

is by far the best means of main-

taining rough grassland, with its

distinctive flowers and insects,

and he spoke lyrically of plans

to seek a lottery grant for the

purchase of a "flying flock" of

sheep, which would eat its way

round important sites in the

kept everyone going with a

skilful mixture of instruction, en-

couragemeet and cajolery.

switching people to eew jobs

wheeever they began to look

dispirited. As he described the

variety of seasoeal tasks that

come up - coppicing, hedge-lay-

ing, dry-stone walling, tree-

planting - he said admiringly,

These volunteers are more

effective than a lot of paid

workers. They're more meticu-

lous. They look at a site, say,

'Right!' and really get their

In the evening they did just

that to the Jew's ears - and it

seemed a poor reward for effort

expended that the result was so disappointing.

Next morning they were all

still on their feet - yet everyone

agreed that the gastronomic ex-

periment had been a severe let-

lic, but the fungus had resisted

attack. "It just lay there in the

frying-pan and looked at us."

said one of them. "And in the

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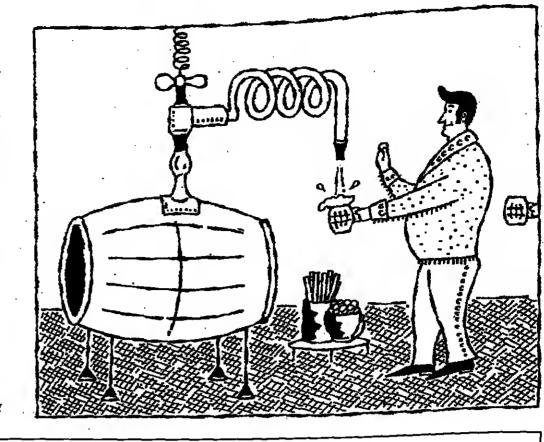
teeth into it."

Back at work, Ian Devon

brewery. Unicorn Brewery, Stockport, Cheshire. Tours are at 7.30pm, but go in the afternoon if you want to see the shire borses. Prices: £3.25, or £6.20 with buffet.

Manchester

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NATURE NOTE

Over the past few days the forest floor has swiftly changed from grey-brown 10 hrilliant green, with the annual eruptioe of wild garlic. Properly known as ransoms - or in some parts of the country as ramps -. Allium ursinum pushes up its fleshy, spear-shaped leaves at an astonishing rate, until they are Sin or 10in tall. Also astonishing is the smell, which, on chilly mornings, sweeps down out of the woods in

Young leaves make a deliciously pungent salad, and country lore has it that a rabbit which has been chased through garlic can go straight into the pot without further seasoning, so highly spiced is it whee it reaches the kitchen. If free-range chickens eat garlic bulbs, the taste invades their eggs.

As the plants grow to maturity, each sends up a single stalk bearing a cluster of white, star-like flowers, so that you get the impression that there has been a sudden snowstorm. The anti-bacterial action of wild garlic has been credited with many medicinal properties, not least an ability to cure piles, and it is said to alleviate whooping cough, if applied to the soles of the feet.

Duff Hort-Davis

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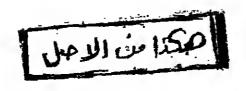
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9/MOTORING

What on earth's going wrong?

Manufacturers say that cars are becoming more and more reliable. So how come the annual breakdown figures never change? James Ruppert reports on a survey that shows up the chief culprits

Cars are getting better all the time, or comes second with 7 breakdowns, folso we are told - safer, more environment-friendly, with better fuel consumption, higher build quality - and, of course, they are more reliable than

Well, maybe oot. The jury is very much out on that last point because, according to a reliability survey by Lex, the chances of breaking down in your company car this year are currently one in four. If you think that is worrying, back in 1997 it was only a one-in-five chance. That now poses the question of just why cars seem to be getting more

The report makes fascinating reading, based as it is on assessing the mechanical reliability of Lex Vehicle Leasing's 88,048 strong fleet. Over a 12-mooth period Lex drivers experienced 21,620 mechanical faults. That is an average of 24.5 breakdowns per 100 vehicles

All driver-induced faults - such as flat batteries and road traffic accidents, plus alarm/immobiliser faults were taken out of the statistics. Only manufacturers with more than 300 vehicles on the Lex fleet were included. Looking at the winners and losers in this survey, the initial conclusion would be that if you are behind the wheel of a Japanese or a German car, the chances of coming to an unscheduled stop are reassuringly remote. Mitsubishi comes out top, with just 5.8 breakdowns per

lowed by all the usual ultra-reliable suspects: BMW (8.2), Honda (9.7) and Audi (10). Another big surprise was Fiat's showing of 11 breakdowns in 100. But probably the main area of interest to every driver and customer is just how badly certain volume and prestige manufacturers did. Ford scored a lowly 31.9, Vauxhall did even worse, at 32.2, and Rover, which, let's not forget, is now a BMW subsidiary, chalked up a truly ter-rible average of 34.7. And the German company's off-road operation Land Rover performed just as poorly, at 25.8, the abysmal Discovery accounting for the majority of breakdowns.

Yet those traditional bastions of build quality Volvo (21.3) and Mercedes (13.4) were adjudged to have per-formed less than brilliantly. Whilst Mercedes's now obsolete 190 has been the model of reliability, its successor, the C class, has encountered all sorts of niggly problems. So what is going on? Or rather, going wrong? A good place to start would be the manufacturers.

Black marks for Rover and Land Rover, who both failed to get back to me. I can't help wondering whether their tardiness in telephone etiquette has some connection with the quality of their. products. Over at Volvo a spokeswoman said: "The results do not reflect our own findings. We can point to the 1997 car quality summary report which covered cars up to two years old, and services that have to pick up the pieces. Volvo customers were more satisfied At the RAC, Peter Brill had an inter-



Discovered: In the Lex survey, the Land Rover Discovery accounted for the majority of breakdowns

vey was based on high-mileage business users, not the typical Volvo driver."

Mercedes had a similar line: "Our findings do not show that cars are becoming worse. Just look at the service intervals for our vehicles, which has been extended from 6,000 to 9,000 miles, and now the computer tells you when it needs servicing, which potentially means a 12,000 to 15,000 window.

"And anyway, the Lex survey included commercial vehicles, which work much harder than passenger cars. We make vans, BMW and Jaguar don't."

Obviously manufacturers don't like this sort of survey, but it is the rescue

than they have ever been. The Lex sur- esting statistic of his own, "Our volume be a human element, in that people beof breakdowns never reduces. We deal with 3 million a year, and our findings suggest that mechanically, cars are in fact much more reliable. The majority of breakdowns are caused by failure of consumable items, such as tyres and batteries, or can be traced to driver error. In fact our number one call out is a flat battery, followed by alternators,

and then wheel changes." The AA says that increasingly complex alarm and electrical systems, and even the pressures of modern living, contribute to breakdowns. Michael Harlow. managing director of ABS, a company that inspects and values used cars, says: "I don't think that cars in themselves are getting any less reliable, but there must

BMW's head of research and

So we'll do just that. The new

senses with enthusiasm the way

ness and discipline than its pre-

dyne. This would be a great car

to own, and no doubt to be seen

to own, but as a car for the tech-

nically-informed lover of driv-

ing, it misses the mark. Could

BMW be losing its way? Come

September, when the new 3-

series goes on sale here, you can

judge for yourself.

In the end, it's all rather ano-

come over-confident and expect their cars to run faultlessly."

But Mr Harlow has evidence that the 16-valve engines fitted to Vauxhalls are causing trouble.

"Vectra, Corsa, Astra and Tigra engines have insufficient inlet valve clearance," be claims, "which is a pretty fundamental oversight in the design. In my opinion, the car-buying public is carrying out around 5 to 10 per cent of the manufacturer's development work. In the first few years of a new model's life, most customers are simply debugging them." Manufacturers may not think that their cars are becoming any less reliable. However, the driving public may be reaching a different cooclusion.



GAVIN GREEN

Whoever ends up buying Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, I hope it isn't a British bidder. Large British companies, including Vickers (current custodian) and British Aerospace (former Rover keeper) have consistently proved themselves incapable of managing British car makers. Their "drip feed investment/ where are the profits?" short-term mentality is inimical to the interests of a bugely investment-intensive car company. Is it any wonder that the Germans and the Japanese, who can always see beyond the next quarterly forecast, are the world's most successful motor industry protagonists, along with those entrepreneurial giants in America?

A consortium of wealthy British enthusiasts would be even more disastrous. At least two such groups are in the running 10 buy Rolls, with big-name backers allegedly including Mohamed al Fayed and the Formula One impresario Bernie Ecclestone. A consortium led by the barrister Michael Shrimpton reckons that it can raise the money from wealthy owners, while another, led by Kevin Morley, former marketing director of Rover, says it can raise venture capital, which, of course, would be even

Rolls-Royce's current boss, Graham Morris, also hopes that a foreign company buys Rolls, "There is no suitable UK bidder. I could have raised the money to buy Rolls-Royce Motor Cars as part of a management buyout, and, as with most management buy-outs, we probably could have made a lot of money for ourselves. But this company desperately oeeds a big company to buy it, and invest in it, and help it."

Morris says that must be another car company, and he hopes to be part of the plan, by staying on as Rolls-Royce's chief executive officer.

The nightmare scenario is that one of these quaint British consortia, full of high oationalistic passioo but with precious little practical experience, bankrolled by some Anglophile hillionaire, will offer the highest price to Vickers. Vickers, being a plc, is duty bound to accept the best offer for its shareholders - in most cases, the highest bid. Rolls is theo owned by a another buoch of short-term idealists/ profiteers who sooo prove themselves eminently unsuitable, and the "For Sale" palaver soon starts all over again. Sooner or later Rolls is going to be owned by a major foreign car company - almost certainly German, and almost certainly BMW - so you might as well get it over with now.

Fortunately, the omens, should BMW buy Rolls, are good. Bloe-chip British car brands have recently prospered under foreign ownership. Jaguar was getting oowhere as a Tory-privatised plc, no matter how masterful the former chairman, John Egan, was at suggesting otherwise. Once sold to Ford (making millionaires out of many of its short-term investors) it prospered massively. The cars are now better than ever, and, come 2001, production will have more than quadrupled compared with

BMW's purchase of Rover has proved more difficult, not least because Rover was even more of a basket case than Jaguar when the Germans marched in. But things are getting better. The first BMW-influenced model, the Land Rover Freelander, is the first internationally competitive Rover Group car for more than 20 years. And the next, the Rover 600/800-replacing R40, to be shown at oext year's Geneva show, promises to be as well made as a BMW, while being true to traditional Rover brand values (comfort, gentility, spaciousness, styling majesty). This is in contrast to all the sad and substandard Rovers made over the past decade or so, which have mostly been rebodied versions of old-school Hondas or, in the case of the recently departed Rover 100, a rehadged Metro.

After oumerous lightweight, or noo-car-literate, British Rover managers, who had little or no idea of what Rover should stand for (a weakness subsequently exposed in the type of cars that were launched) and no interoational experieoce, BMW boss Bernd Pischetsrieder is of a hugely higher calibre. What should a Rover be? I asked him, a few months after the BMW take-over.

"Cheaper Jaguars," be replied. He is spot on, of course. If the British car industry had had a few Pischetsrieders of its own in positions of power, back in the dim and dark days of the Sixties and Seventies, theo our indigenous industry might oot have self-destructed so ignominiously. And Rolls-Royce Motor Cars would not be better off being owned by the Germans.

Registration Numbers



More room for improvement

Roadtest: John Simister drives the new BMW 318i

TAR O' NUMB

day cottage.

ent vacancies.

Oh, the trials of success. You make a product which everybody wants, which achieves an ridge along the side sills, at the almost iconographic status in its market - and then it's time to replace it because you know you can make a better one. What do you do? Strike out in a bold. new direction in the hope that your customers admire your design ethos so much that they will follow you come what may? Or play safe, building on what went before, lest you kill the goose that laid the golden eggs?

You will see from the picture The new 3-series, set to be the most-bought BMW of all, looks a lot like the old ooe. Nearly crash, building it better, makeverything has changed in the ing it quieter, and causing it to BMW's stylists, masterminded frootal structure can absorb by the American Chris Bangle, more than 60 per cent more ering their grip away, because pace as BMW. "Drive it," says

such an assertion of conservatism, but a creator always finds it difficult to stand back from the creation. Bangle could point - has pointed - at the rounded cut-outs for the headlamp lenses, at the tapering way the so-called "double kidney" front grille is now built into the bonnet (I've never seen kidneys that shape), at the stepped rear lights reminiscent. of those found on the previous 5-series model - but the visual deal is fundamentally the same.

Where's the progress, then? It's more a case of rewarding loyalty, achieved by giving buyers enough extra space in the back for the 3-series oo longer that BMW has gone for caution. to be laughably cramped, greatly improving the car's ability to cocoon its occupants in a oew car, but only slightly. oeed less maintenance. The

senger compartment caves in, and every version comes with eight airhags. There are two in the front, as normal; one in each door panel; and, on each side, one secreted in the windscreen. pillar and above the front doors, which bursts forth as a giant

There's no doubt that the new car is better. It feels better the moment you sit in it: it's lighter, airier, made of betterquality materials. All versions have electric seat adjustment, and you can programme up to three keys separately to adjust the driver's seat aotomatically to suit the key owner's prefer-

ences, on unlocking the car. Also standard are "corner brake cootrol", a system which actomatically adjusts the braking effort on each wheel to help you keep control when braking in a slippery bend; and a traction-control system to belp odd result for a company as purstop the rear wheels from slith-

would be mortified to hear crash energy before the pas- all BMWs are still rear-wheel-

The new range starts as a four-door saloon, so the current Coupé, Compact and Touring. continue for a while. As before there are sweet-spinning sixcylinder engines towards the top of the range (320i, 323i - 2.5litres, in fact - and 328i), and humble four-cylinder versions lower down. One of these is a powerful and efficient new diesel, with direct injection, another is the engine that powers

ational, the 318i. This engine has grown from

most attainable of the aspir-

what has always been the mainstay of the 3-series range, the

1.8 litres to 1.9, though the name hasn't grown with it, and oow incorporates a pair of balancer shafts to make it run more smoothly. Yet it still has just eight valves in its cylinder head instead of the now-usual 16, an portedly technologically on the

torrent of abuse, but it never

came because be couldn't have

been happier. He liked nothing

more than tinkering under the

bonnet and taking the engine to

bits to find out what the prob-

I had learned my lesson, so

once I had got rid of that hor-

rible Range Rover I went and

did the decent thing and

bought, for £1,000, a very old

Series 3 Land Rover which has

never let me down.

BMW 318I Specifications

Price: from £19,500 approx. Engine: 1,895cc, four cylinders, eight valves. Ilabhp at 5,500rpm. Five-speed gearbox, rear-wheel drive. Top speed 128mph, 0-60 in 10. i sec, 31-36mpg.

Rivals

Alfa 156 2.0 Twin Spark: £19,727. Stunningly original that the BMW lacks.

Audi A4 1.8: £19.01. The car that stole the thunder from the old 3-series. Still desirable, but cramped in the back.

Citroën Xantia 2.0 Exclusive: £18, 250. Just facelifted, well-equipped and now impressively refined as well as technically intriguing with its hydropneumatic suspension.

Mercedes-Benz CI80: 19.990. Lacks power and equipment compared with BMW, but that badge still counts for a lot.

MOTORING

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MY WORST CAR: PAUL HEINEY'S RANGE ROVER

In the early Eighties it was one of the trappings of moving to the country - you had to buy a Range Rover to fit in. But first of all I bought a very ancient Land Rover which proved to be incredibly faithful and utterly reliable,

Unfortunately, the lure of the Range Rover proved too great, and that was how I came to own my worst car.

I suppose I should have realised that this white Range Rover would turn out to be a white elephant, because it was so suspiciously cheap in the first to a halt. I found that I had to place. The biggest problem it had was getting all eight cylinical sequence, and that led to an endless series of breakdowns. The fault could never properly he detected, and after about 30 it jackknifed and got badly



miles the car would just come jump out, lift the bonnet, remove the distributor cap, then ders to fire in some sort of logluck, and smashed it up.

again. Then I had a stroke of Towing a horse box one day,

damaged. No one was hurt, but he had broken down on the way I was happy because I thought back to Ipswich. I waited for a the insurance company would write it off. They didn't. The assessor

looked at the mess and reckoned that the car could be rebuilt, but that didn't make it any more reliable. I advertised it in the local paper and I had a response from a collector of vintage Rolls-Royces.

Rather than tax them all, he wanted to tow them to shows and thought that the Range Rover would be ideal. And so it proved, because when I took him for a test drive it behaved itself impeccably. I felt a pang of guilt when he paid over the money, but thought no more about it until I got a phone call that evening.

It was the chap who had is published in April by Hodder bought the Range Rover, and & Stoughton, price £16.99.

Paul Heiney has been a national radio and television presenter since 1975 and has written widely on farming and country matters. His new novel, 'Domino's Effect',

Camellias: all or nothing

A dash of realism is needed for successful cultivation of these temperamental beauties, as Anna Pavord found from bitter experience

Camellias are like computers. If you create exactly the right programme, they will whirt away with no problems. If there is a tiny maladjustmeot in the schedule, they go to pieces. After struggling for years to persuade them that they like my basically alkaline garden, I now grow a few in tubs and let the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew astound me with the rest.

The earliest outdoor varieties have anyway. beeo blooming for the past month betweeo Kew. They have also been lighting up masses of town gardens, seeming to do particularly well in shady, rather dark basements. Camellias are seductive creatures. but before you succumb completely, ask yourself a few important questions.

First of all: soil. Have you got what it takes to produce a healthy plant with shiny dark green foliage and plenty of flowers? Camellias like an acid soil between pH5 and 6.5. I thought, by excavating a 4ft x 4ft pit pale pink) will be the safest choice. Other and filling it with the best acid mixture I could make, that I could fool my camellias into thinking they were at home.

For a few years it worked, with the help of doses of Sequestreoe. Then gradually they began to mope, until I dug them up

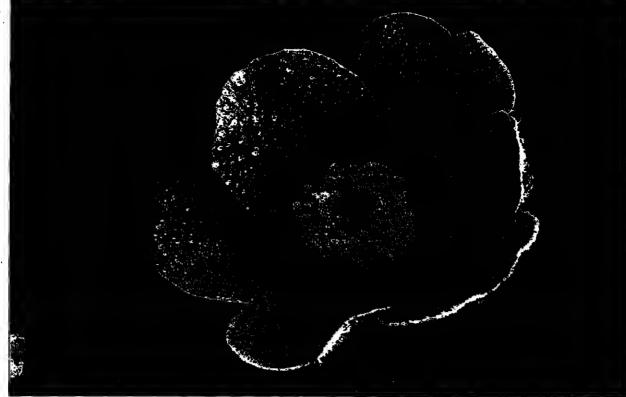
polythene may have put off the day of reckoning. The best camellia soils are not only acid, but also rich in humus. Leaf mould is ideal.

The second big question is where to plant. In the wild, camellins grow under the protectioo of a high forest canopy, and the principle of sheltered shade is one to hang on to in the garden. They will stand np to an occasional gale, but hate contin-uous draughts. The soil occds to be moist, but not soggy. A north-facing wall, in a shel-tered courtyard, will be ideal. Avoid a position, such as an east-facing wall, where early sun may catch frost-bound blooms and brown them off.

Having found the right spot, the next hurdle will be to select a variety that is more likely to thrive than not. Of the several thousand kinds available, more than half will be 100 teoder to grow successfully outside in the UK. A different half have such violent colours that you would not want them

Generally, go for varieties of Camellia the Victoria Gate and the Lioo Gate at xwilliamsii and Cjaponica. Csasanqua and C reticulata types will be better under glass. Theo check flower types, sorted into groups such as single, semi-double, anemone form, full peony form and so on. The more complicated sorts are unlikely to weather well outside. Whites are touchier than reds about frost, wind and wet. For real choice, go to a specialist oursery.

In the north of the country, tough C x williamsä types such as 'J C Williams' (single good ooes are 'Brigadoon' (semi-double deep pink), the faithful 'Donation' (semidouble soft pink), Donatioo's daughter 'Rose Parade' (deep rose peony form) or 'St Ewe' (bright rose-pink single). 'Donation' is the most popular camellia in and gave them to a friend with a classic Britain, in flower from late February



"rather sparse plant, but very free-flowering. 'Leonard Messel' (deep pink, loose peony form) is another popular type, half C x williamsii, half the looser, laxer C reticulata.

A camellia stops growing around the end of July. It theo settles to the business of producing flower buds - or oot, as the case may be. This is a cause of great frustration to camellia owners. Dryness at the roots will certainly inhibit the process, and it is vital to keep camellias well watered piece of acid woodland. Lining the pit with through until late April. It is an upright and between July and September. Too liberal

a hand with nitrogen feeds may also inhibit the production of flower buds.

Some varieties, such as 'Bow Bells' and 'Charity', are notably more free-flowering than others. Cx williamsii types are the most reliable, although some, such as 'Elsie Jury' and 'Fragrant Pink', need sun to set and ripen their flower buds. Varieties of Cjaponica may be shy to flower when young, but give a good display after four or five

In conservatories, cameilias grow most happily without heat, though they will come into flower earlier if the temperature is kept at about 7-10°C (45-50°F). Collect rain water for them. The calcium in tap water is likely to upset them. Plants in pots should be moved outside between May and

October.

Photo: Howard Rice/Garden Picture Library

. If they are planted in a conservatory border, allow them to rest for about six weeks after flowering, without food or too much water. Then feed them with weak liquid fertiliser every two weeks until early August, and use the same routine for camellias growing in tubs outside. Sequestrene does not count as food; it is medicine. In open ground, scatter some dried blood round plants in April when the soil is damp, and mulch with pine needles, leaf mould or dead camellia flowers. Some swear by tea leaves. Tea bags look very drear, because the bag bit doesn't rot down.

Czechoslovakia. He was a Jesuit priest and If you have got the preliminaries right, set up pharmacies for the Jesuits in several of their overseas outposts. Camellias first aftercare will be minimal. Camellias don't oeed regular pruning, though you can snip flowered in England in 1739, when two redoff any lopsided shoots in February. Aphids and scale insects may cause sooty mould, which forms on the leaves under the places: where the dread pests are quartered. A pesticide will see off the bugs but you may need to wash the leaves, rubbing them gently with your thumbs, to get rid of the mould.

flowered C japonica bloomed in the hothouse at Lord Petre's garden at Thorndon Hall in Essex. The hothouse treatment killed the plants, but fortunately not before the head gardener, James Gordon, had taken cuttings and raised them in his Mile

Kamel, born in 1661 in Brunn, central

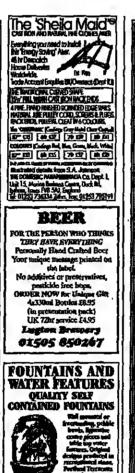
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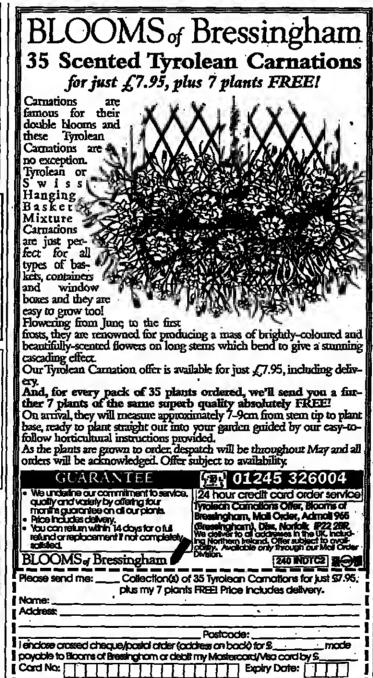


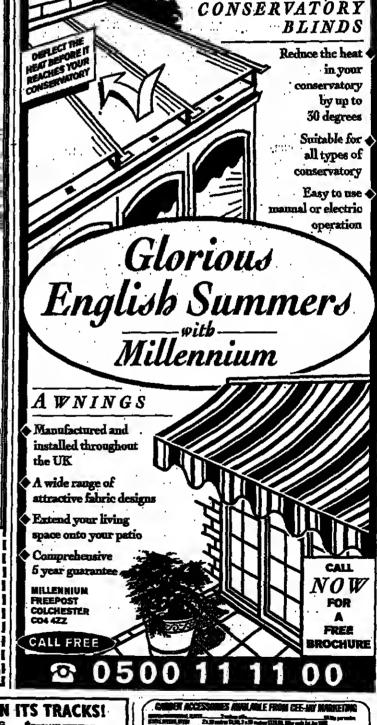


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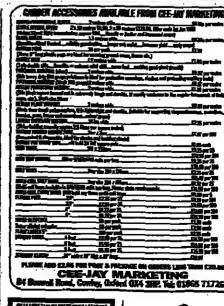


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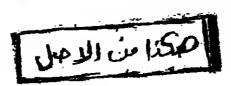
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Camellia counsel

See camellias at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, open daily, 9.30am-4pm, admission £4.50; Anthony Woodland Garden, Torpoint, Comwall, open March-Oct Mon-Sat Ham-5.30pm and Sun 2pm-5.30pm, admission £2.50; The Pines, Salcombe, Devon, open tomorrow, Ilam-5pm, admission £2; The Magnolias, Brentwood, Essex, open Sun 29 Mar, 10am-5pm, admission £1.50; East Bergholt Place, East Bergholt, Suffolk open 29 March, 2pm-5.30pm, admission £2. National collections of camellias: Anthony House (see above); Mount Edgecumbe House, Cremyll, near Torpoint, Cornwall PLIO 11-1Z (01752 822236). 20 species, 500 cultivars.

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catalogue. Read 'Gardening with Camellias' by New Zealand author Jim Rolfe (God-

Join the International Camellia Society: UK representative Mr HC Short 4l Galveston Road, East Putney, London SW I5 2RZ (0181-870) 6884).

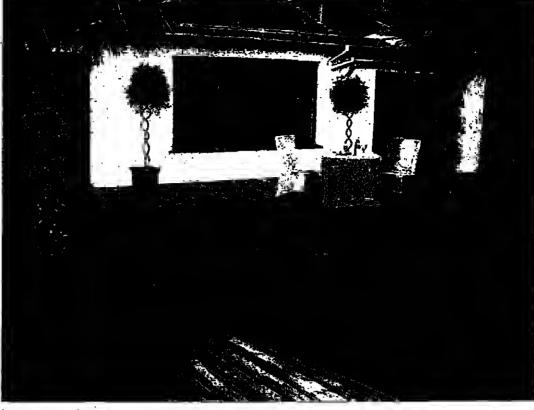
CUTTINGS

April courses at the English Gardening School include one-day sessions on "the Mixed Border" (16 April, Nada Jennett) and "Scent and its hapact in the Garden" (23 April, Phillip Harkness and Stephen Lacey). For more information contact the school at the Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS (0171-352 4347).

A superb stone pine, Pinus pinea, growing in Maids of Honour Row. Richmond Green, has recently been designated as one of the great trees of London. An initiative launched jointly by the London Tree Forum and the Countryside Commission aims to mark the city's best trees with a commemorative green plaque. To nominate a tree for the scheme, contact the tree officer at your local authority. For a leaflet explaining more about the project, write to the London Tree Forum, PO Box 15146, London WC2B 6SJ.

The Alpine Garden Society is holding a show today (12pm-4.30pm) at the Burleigh Community College, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, admission £1. Look out for primulas, cyclamens, sax-ifrages, orchids, dwarf narcissus, fritillaries, sempervivums and ferns.

For bridging awkward gaps, providing a smooth cover over uneven



are friendly and adaptable. Using timber imported from the US (see Prices start at around £500 for a a deck, you can convert a steep picture). DIY enthusiasts can send deck 8ft x 12ft; the price includes slope into an extra outdoor living for their free Decking Projects timber, fixings, screws and nails. For space. They can be cut round trees: Book, which has plans and advice details contact the Outdoor Deck they can be bent round corners. The on construction. The company can Outdoor Deck Company uses also arrange site surveys, and will Sheen Lane, London SW14 8LP surfaces in the garden, timber decks southern pine, a honey-coloured advise oo installing decks to order. (0181-878 7887).

Company, Mortimer House, 46

Mothers Day Gifts

WEEKEND WORK

Having pruned your Jasmine, buddleia, climbing roses, dogwoods and late-flowering clematis (*The Independent*, 21 Febmary), turn your attention to the wisteria. This should have been half-primed last summer, when any growths that you did not want to tie in should have been cut back by half. Now it is time to finish the job. Cut back all spare tendrils, leaving only two pairs of buds at the base of the new growth. Without this severe pruning, wisteria is apt to get stuck in leafing mode.

Mulch the ground where lily of the valley and Solomon's seal grow, with well-rotted compost. This is more easily done before the new shoots are through the ground than afterwards. Mushroom compost, a by-product of the mushroomgrowing industry, is excellent for jobs such as this, and is friable

Prune and train ornamental vines such as Vitis coignetiae and 'Brant', growing on walls and pergolas. On pergolas, you can wrap the long growths round the poles, securing them with soft string. On walls, you should train out the growths so that they do not cross over each other, fixing the stems at intervals with galvanised vine eyes.

Hoe gently between rows of winter-planted garlic, to loosen soil that has got beaten down and sour during the heavy rain of the last couple of months. Do the same between early rows of broad beans. Feed if necessary, with an all-round fertiliser such as Growmore.

Sow seed of herbaccous perennials such as hipins, delphinium, statice, thalictrums, primroses (I've just sown an old-fashioned mix of primroses called 'Cottage Pastels'), violas and pansies.

Repot indoor plants such as asparagus fern, aspidistra, and succuleots of all kinds, giving them, if possible, a pot one size larger than the one they were previously growing in.

Mothers Day Gifts

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Poetry Competitions £12,000.00 Prize Money to be Won

The International Library of Poetry has just announced that it is sponsoring an International Amateur Poetry Competition in the United Kingdom and Ireland. There will be eight competitions this year open to all amateur poets. Entry to the competitions is free and there is no purchase requirement to win one of 70 prizes, including a £1.000.00 Grand Prize.

How to Enter Anyone may enter the competition simply by sending in only one original poem, any subject, any style, to: The International Library of Poetry Dept. 91813

FREEPOST LON 2229 Kent ME10 3BR (No stamp required) note this address is for poer

nirles must be sont to the address below) The poem should be no more than twenty lines, must be typed or neatly printed, and the poet's name and address most Losting Calm, Awaken to a Dream, and appear at the top of the page. Poems must Jewels of the Imagination, among others. be the original work of the submitting author and will not be returned. All poets who enter will receive an acknowledgement, along with complete competition rules, within approximately nine weeks.

How to Win £1,000.00 Grand Prize, ten Second Prizes of prizes in the UK and Ireland competitions

£50.00 each and 59 Third Prize gifts with a slone. £28.00 value will also be awarded. All 70 edition through their purchase of a copy competition."

For further information and to receive a copy of the rules, send a self-addressed,
The letterestional Library of Poery, FAO: Competition Rules,
4 Cremens Road, Dolphin Park, Stiffinghourne, Kent ME10 3HB

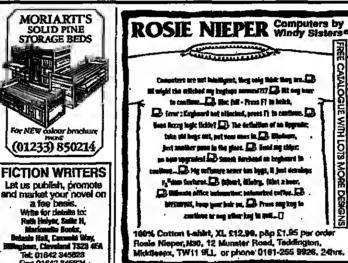


· Featured above are some of The

available). Every poem remains the exclusive property of its author. Anthologies published by the organisation include: A

World's Largest Poetry Organisation The International Library of Poetry, the international affiliate of The National Library of Poetry (founded in the United States in 1987 to promote the work and achievements of contemporary poets), publishes poetry and sponsors competitions All the poems entered into the around the world. In recent years they have competition will be judged on originality, awarded prize money to more than 5,000 use of language, poetic style, creativity, and poets in over 60 countries. In the next 12 artistic expression. In addition to the months they will award £12,000.00 in each

"It's always exciting to discover new prize winners will be featured in a beautiful, talent," stated Howard Ely, Managing Editor randbound anthology to be published at the of The International Library of Poetry. conclusion of the competition. And what's "We're especially interested in poems from more, non-winners may guarantee new or unpublished poets. I tage everyone publication of their poem in this beautiful who is interested in poetry to enter this



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Plum for it

A taste of ... prunes from Agen in south-western France. Nikki Spencer samples the finest of dried fruit

In Britain we may regard prunes as mildly amusing, conjuring up images of tweed-clad schoolmistresses keeping themselves regular. In France, however, they take their prunes seriously. So seriously, that in the Lot valley in the heart of Gascony, where they claim they grow the finest prunes in the world, they have a museum dedicated solely to the dried fruit.



Visitors to the Prune Museum in the small village of Granges sur Lot can trace the history of prune-making in the reginn from the Crusades to the present day, and sample prunes dipped in everything you can think of - including brandy, honey and chocolate.

Towards the end of August the region takes on a purple haze, as the plums ripen and the air is filled with the smell of "cooking" prunes.

Picking is carried out by means of a slightly Heath Robinson method, A sort of tractor with large pincers grabs the trees around their trunks and vibrates them so that a shower of fruit rains down on the ground into large, inverted umbrellas

One story goes that prior to mechanisation in California -- where prime trees were taken in of bringing 500 monkeys from Panama to pick onion pizza.

the plums, only to find that they are the fruit as fast as they picked it.

Once the fruit has been harvested, turning a plum into a prune is a special skill. It's not just a question of dehydration, but of cooking the fruit for about 24 hours at such a temperature that it remains succulent and moist, then storing it in wooden boxes for two months so that the prunes gain their deep black colour.

The prunes that many of us were forced to eat as children were usually tinned, or pretty tough and chewy, but modern technology makes it possible for the modern prune to be eaten or used in recipes straight from the packet or the jar, rather than needing to be soaked or drained. And even in the UK we are catching on to the idea. Sales of prunes, particularly from France, have trebled in the last year, according to the supermarket chain J Sainsbury.

The Prune Museum in Granges sur Lot is about 30 minutes' drive from the bustling port nf Agen. It is open all year, except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Entrance costs 10F for adults, and is free for children under 10. By prior arrangement the museum will arrange tours of the surrounding farms and orchards. (0033 5 53 84 00 69)

Uses for prunes

King Henry VIII served prunes as a starter at all his state banquets.

· In Japan prune paste is sold door to door, and is consumed by the teaspoonful as a skin and hair Unlikely but true: mail-order cata- half years ago by Erica Wolfe-Murray. opened a small shop about 18 months

During the 19th century young ladies were advised to practise saying phrases and words beginning with "P" as an aid to gaining an attractively shaped mouth. A popular phrase, mentioned in Charles Dickens's Little Dorni, was "prunes and prisms".

The California Prune Board, which has deelared next week National Prune Week, claims that, as well as heing a healthy snack, prunes combined with plenty of fluids can reduce hangover blues. With the endorsement of the Californian model Caprice and the former Baywatch actress Alexandra Paul, the board will 1865, and where they now supply 74 per cent of be encouraging us to sample dishes such as apthe prune market -- one grower hit on the idea ple and prune strudel, and savoury prune and





Catalogue of simplicity

The stuff of ... natural style. Modern classics by post

logues need not cause groans of incredulity at the host of hizarre objects you never knew you couldn't live without. Not, at least, if you look through the pages of Touch Design's brochure. This is heaven for anyone in search of that elusive special present, neat storage unit or garden accessory. Here quality and real originality are the hallmarks. Garden willow sculptures (£180); glass trays (from £69.50); linen cushions (£29.25) - you'll find yourself hard put not to have a sudden, aching need for most of the goods that have been so carefully selected.

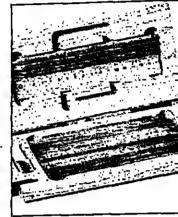
concern that was started three-and-a- Sixpenny Handley. Here they also Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"It was at a time when most mail-order catalogues were full of imported things - usually fairly shabby stuff, and much of it plastic," she says. "So I decided to get together a selection of goods made from natural materials and in simple shapes -- sort of classics, that will go

Where possible the items are handmade, mostly in Britain, and nearly all personally known to Erica. She and her team of two others design about 70 per cent of the products, and they run the packaging and postage side of the busi-

ago. "This has been enormous fun," Erica enthuses. "Customers now tend to bring things in to show us and say, 'Have you ever thought about this?' It's really rewarding talking to them, and realising that there are an increasing number of people who very much appreciate uncomplicated goods that are well made and simply designed."

the suppliers are craftspeople who are To order a catalogue from Touch Design, personally known to Erica. She and her call 01725 552888 or fax 01725 552605: Touch Design's shop at 51 High Street, Sixpenny Handley, near Salisbury, Wiltshire, is open every morning Monday to Satur-The company is a small, family ness from the West Country village of day and in the afternoon on Tuesday,



wough a bright!)

Well crafted: top left, willow geese garden sculptures by Serena de la Hey, £180 each; top, wall-mounted cone vase £28.75; above, cedarwood pencil box £18.25

GAMES

Every day you may read a new survey telling you what percentage of which group does what to whom how often. To make all such future surveys superfluous, here is a percentage table, all from the last 12 months. The sample population is British unless otherwise stated.

99% of Britons watch television. 98% think contraception should remain free on

the NHS. 97% of nurses believe there are staff shortages in their hospitals.

96% of casualty nurses have been verbally abused. 95% of railway stations have no nappy-changing or breast-feeding facilities.

94% of executives say they usually finish a business trip with a sense of accomplishment. 93% of GPs say a new bed can ease back pain. 92% of teenage girls in Middlesex tidy their rooms at least once a week.

91% adults would never agree to wife-swapping 90% of football fans think the game would henefit from professional referees.

89% think the Millennium Dome is a waste of 88% of women say they would not fuss about

their appearance before appearing on TV. 87% of the French think Britain is improving. 86% think sight is the sense we most fear losing. 85% would back a reduction in the drink-drive

84% of bishops can name at least one Spice Girl. 83% of us spend Christmas with our families. 82% of Britons have never heard of Lionel

Jospin, the French prime minister. 81% of women think that contraception is mainly a woman's responsibility.

80% of trains have no nappy-changing facilities. 79% of us felt the coverage of Diana's death was sensitive.

78% of car-crimes are thefts from the vehicle. 77% of parents are unhappy with the train service. 76% of Americans think the British are wellinformed about current affairs.

75% of working children are employed illegally. 74% of hospital doctors do not expect the NHS to exist in 50 years.

73% of fishermen think hunting should be illegal. 72% of teenagers tidy their rooms once a month or less.

71% of adults think young offenders are let off too lightly. 70% of football fans say statistical analysis

STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT WILLIAM HARTSTON

enhances their enjoyment of the game. 69% of wine is bought in supermarkets. 67% of Yorkshire women are still waiting for the sex of their dreams

66% of women do not feel confident naked 65% of people hate junk mail 65% of 35- to-45-year-olds are more financially

content than they were in their 20s. 64% of high-achieving women who have had an affair have not regretted it. 63% of victims of car crime are aged 25 to 35.

62% of people blame themselves for marital rows. 61% of men think think contraception is mainly a woman's responsibility. 60% of shoppers say they try to buy British.

59% think big businesses exploits the work force. 58% pay cash for Christmas shopping. 57% of men aged 20-24 have taken illegal drugs.

56% of men in Scotland are too fat. 55% disapprove of banning beef on the bone.

54% back a smoking ban in all public places. 53% want to ban all forms of tobacco sponsorship. 52% of over-50s have life insurance.

51% plan to organise a party for the millennium. 50% of women think they are overweight. 49% of 18-24 year-olds would like to go abroad for Christmas.

48% of teepagers smoke or have tried it. 47% of Scottish women think they are too fat. 46% of 8-to-16-year-olds can't find London in a

45% of the total workforce are women. . . 44% of women feel stressed. -43% of women aged 20-24 have taken drugs. 42% of women high-achievers admit to having

had an extra-marital affair. 41% of people over 55 consider themselves lucky. 40% of raw meat sales are chicken. 39% of people touch wood for luck.

38% have not had an eye test in the last two years. 37% think walking under ladders is unlucky. 36% of us made a New Year's resolution. 35% of couples argue more than once a week.

34% of nurses have been attacked while on duty. 33% of households play the midweek lottery. 32% of women high-achievers have no children. 31% are planning to go to a millennium party.

30% of cars in Barnsley are red. 29% of adults have taken a short break holiday. 28% of households are of one person only. 27% of mothers have an epidural anaesthetic. 26% of marital rows take place in the evenings. 25% of women say they think about sex daily. 24% of women think they are not attractive.

23% of executives think new technology has made life more stressful. 22% of women in the Midlands have grey hair. 21% of men would pay £1,000 to set Melinda

Messenger free if she were kidnapped. 20% of women say their sex life is fantastic. 19% of us start Christmas shopping in October. 18% vote the Scottish accent their favourite.

17% of New Year's resolutions last less than a day. 16% of men are obese. 15% of the UK population are over 65.

14% do not eat red meat. 13% of breath tests for alcohol are positive. 12% of teenagers' bedrooms have a computer.

11% of Britons say they don't like Germans. 10% of male workers have a female boss. 9% of GP consultations are in the patient's home. 8% of companies are staffed on Christmas Day.

7% of vicars do not have television sets. 6% of cars in Chelsea are Mercedes. 5% of hathroom buyers opt for a bidet.

4% of adults belong to a political party. 3% of consumers do not celebrate Christmas.

2% of executives have returned from a business trip to find they have been sacked.

1% of us made a New Year's resolution to keep a

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Marguerite Wolff, concert pianist.

My brother tells people that I play all day, which is of course irrefutable. As a concert pianist, one works enormously hard and practises many hours.

My athletic life has always been very limited, 1 longed to be an elegant tennis player, but of course tennis is tremendously bad for the arm muscles, and skiing is impossible hecause you can't afford to break anything; it's never the same again, however well it mends. It can make all the difference in the world if you have a break. I think Somerset Maugham wrote a story about somebody who wanted to be a concert pianist. But they lost the tip of their little finger -- just the very tip -- which made everything impossible.

I had to play tremendously safe with a lot of physical things. I was allowed a rather genteel game of netball, or a little bit of rounders, and that was it. Part of a game after all is the risk you take, isn't it? If you start playing very young, there's no

question about it, you can get wonderful rewards. At times with an orchestra, you can go as near to heaven as you can on this earth, but against that, you give up a tremendous amount of lovely, ordinary things. 1 remember as a child preparing to play a

concert. I was about 15, and I'd just been in my piano teacher, who was quite a tyrannical sort of person. It was a hot day and as I stood waiting at the number 31 hus stop, I remember seeing some girls just sountering along with their tennis rackets. They were obviously having a lovely time without any particular responsibilities or cares, which made

me very wistful. I still feel it quite strongly at the number 31 bus stop at Kilburn Bridge.

Marguerite Wolff's biography, "The Adventures of a Concert Pianist" is out of print, but determined individuals can follow her progress in Brazil en route to Miami for her 1998 concert series with the National Symphony Orchestra.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3558 Saturday 14 March DOWN

ACROSS

Type of nut (5) Mix cards (7) Smoker's requisite (7) US state (5)

Kingly (5) Set of infant's clothes (7) 13 Mislay (4) 15 Put in suitcase (6) 17 Bird of prey (6) 20 It's a deal! (4) 22 Come to appreciate (7) 24 Thespian (5).

26 Very light brown (5) 27 Issue (7) 28 Passivity (7) 29 Solids left in cup (5)

Supporter of mine? (3-4) Taxi driver (5) .

Headlamp housing (7) Grimaces (6) Oneness (5) Blandish (7) 7 Run off together (5)
12 Long period of time (4)
14 Chances (4) 16 Communion vessel (7) 18 Gull or albatross, e.g. (7) 19 Items of male underwear

(1-6) 21 Accumulation of fluid (6) 22 Religious teacher (5) 25 String (5)

Seletion to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Arm. 3 Money (Harmony), 7 Uprising, 8 Tsar, 9 Anthenticate, 10 Edible, 12 Budget, 14 Carving knife, 18 Urdu, 19 Pardoned, 20 Decay, 21 Yet. DOWN: 1 Applaud, 2 Moist, 3 Might, 4 Noticed, 5 Yeast, 6 Birenne, 11 Bivouac, 12 Bakery, 13 Everest, 15 Acrid, 16 Nippy, 17 Irony.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

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A number of old favourites are being republished under the Batsford banner. One such is Masters and

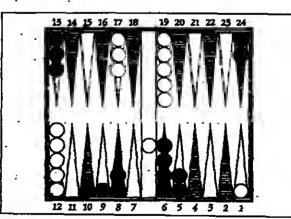
Monsters by the late Victor Mollo. This deal from the book has a curiously simple point. During an exchange of hard luck stories, Karapet (the unluckiest player of all time) described how, after reaching Five Diamonds and getting a heart lead, he "knew" that he was going down.

As he explained: "The contract is unbreakable unless the trumps are 3-0 and then only if East has the void and also SK. And even then you are still home as long as West has three clubs. The odds against everything being wrong must be at least 30:1 and ..."

He was interrupted by the Hideous Hog who explained that it was not an unlucky hand at all, for he had been fortunate enough to escape a spade lead. After the actual heart lead, the contract was virtually 100 per cent.

Can you see the point that the Hog was making? The secret of the play lies in overtaking the king of hearts with the ace at trick one! Then you lead the ten of diamonds and run it if West plays low. Even if this loses to the singleton jack, East will not be able to attack spades from his side of the table, and the losers are restricted to at most two trump tricks.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



The most difficult question of all: when should you double? The answer would fill a book but let's try to establish some guidelines. First, in terms of game-winning chances it is normally reckoned that somewhere between 67 per cent and 75 per cent is correct. Of course you may not be good at estimating percentages but just ask yourself this: If I had this position 100 times would I he confident of winning at least two games out of every three or possibly even three out of four? If the answer is yes then you should consider doubling.

Second, you should consider how the game might change over the next two rolls. If after your roll and that of your opponent you think he will still have a take, then it is normally correct to wait. If, however, there is a very good chance that he

would have to drop, then again you should consider doubling. Third, never forget you are playing another human being. How will your opponent react to a double? Does he take any double offered? Or does he drop lots of doubles quickly? You must adapt your cube-handling depending upon who you are playing. Knowing your opponent well is a key element to good

Finally, there is the position itself. The three elements I normally consider are the race, the structure and threats. If you are better in two out of three of these you should normally be considering doubling. Look at the position above. Black opened with a 31 making his 5-point. White rolled 63 and played 24/15 and then Black rolled 43 and played 13/10*, 13/9. White rolled 65 and stayed on the bar. Black now has a very good early-game double. He is ahead in the race, has the better structure and some very real threats. In fact despite this being only the third move of a game White can only just take this double.



Through a glass brightly

Making it using a mix of modern and medieval traditions, Sally Staples learns how to create stained-glass windows

hist as children like to take a painting home commissions, and also teaches oil painting. from school, most adults who decide to She whizzes round her class of 12 students learn a new craft want to be able to produce a piece of handiwork after a minimal amount of instruction. And one of the pleasures of learning to make stained-glass windows is that you can do just that. After only a day and a half of basic tuition at Earnley Concourse, a residential adult education college in West Sussex, John Reed, a hiology teacher, had completed a 10-inful abstract design. The cost of materials by me. was just £8.

who gets someone in to paint the walls and I have on background in anything artis- colnurs to form a suitable background. If tic," says John. "I'm buying a cottage that has a workshop so I decided to find a hobby, and wanted in give stained glass a try.

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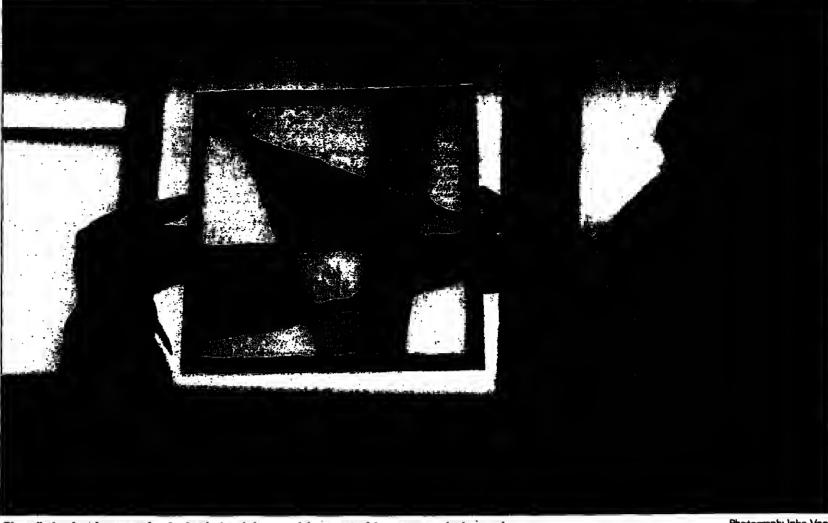
"Tve oever cut glass before; it really is markably easy. The most important are shaping their designs." fning seems to me to start off your design with an accurate drawing."

- men and women of all ages - allowing them to work at their own pace.

"The course is four days, and I start by giving them an idea about the history of glass, and then I tell them to go away and doodle nn a pad until they come up with a design they like. Some people naturally prefer an abstract picture; others want a design that looks like the object square stained-glass window with a colour- it is meant to be. Both approaches are fine

"If a student wants to do a recognisable "I'm totally impractical - the sort of man flower in a pot, I will show them how you can stylise the design and get the right you use too many reds and blues and heraldic colours it can detract from the main picture, so I talk to the students about the textures and shades of colours wheo they

Once the design has been finalised, it is enlarged to a 10-in square, then drawn The tutor is Annie Goodman, who has again, the second drawing being the "carworked oo large-scale chorch window toon". It is on this that the glass shapes will



Glass distinction: however simple the design, it is essential to start with an accurately drawn plan

Photograph: John Voos

several bucketfuls of glass pieces of all sizes, shapes, textures and colours. Each student is supplied with the basic tools: a simple glass-cutter, pair of pliers, an nld kitchen knife, a sharp lead-cutting knife, a brush, a lump of tallow candle, strips of lead in two thicknesses, and solder.

Angela Morris, who has come all the way from Alderney to spend a holiday where she could also learn a craft, has sensibly chosen a simple design of sun rays. "I thought it would take weeks to produce a window, but once you are taught the technique of cutting glass you can make good progress," she says. "The nice thing about a residential course like this is that you can make friends, learn something oew and have a holiday all at the same time."

Each piece of glass is placed over the

be cut. Then the fun starts. Annie provides relevant section of the design and held in sure that windows are rattle proof. place with horseshoe nails, then a glasscutter is run round the outline, just as in tracing. Different thicknesses of glass and varying textures require different pressure when cutting.

> Once all the glass pieces bave been cut, the lead strip is cut to frame the design and to secure each piece of glass. The lead is malleable, and surprisingly easy tn cut. When all the lead and glass pieces are in place, the joining-points are brushed and scraped with tallow: "a medieval tradition which belps the melted solder to spread over the julnt," says Annie.

Theo the solder iroo is heated and used to melt small amounts of solder over the lead joints. Once the soldering oo both sides of the window is complete, Annie demonstrates the final touch to en- age in glass. He and his wife Gisela, also obtained from local education authorities.

Rolling up her sleeves, she dips her hand

into a pot of hlack grouting cement made up of linseed nil, white spirit, black paint and whiting. This is the messy hit, but a request to use rubber gloves from a faintheart at the back of the class is firmly refused.

The liquid cement is ruhbed with a finger onder each piece of lead to eliminate any cracks. This is done on both sides of the window, which should then be wiped thoroughly with newspaper. It will take a few days for the cement to set hard.

Dr Sydney Aynsworth, from Gosport, had been stuck on ideas for a design but was inspired by a picture oo TV of a road winding away into the distance and a flashing Balisha beacon in the foreground

on the course, are hoping to insert their win-

Other students were working on stainedglass panels with house numbers, and Pamela Wilks, from Emsworth in Hampshire, had designed n brightly coloured clown which she planned to hang against a large picture window in her house to deter birds from trying to fly through the glass.

dows into fanlights at home.

A four-day residential course at Earnley Concourse, Earnley, Chichester, West Sussex P020 7JL (01243 670392) costs £218 for full board and all the college's facilities including swimming pool. Non-residents pay £144. Annie Goodman teaches similar courses at The Old Rectory, Fittleworth, near Pulborough in Sussex (01798 865306). Further in-- and has managed to reproduce the im- formation on stained glass classes can be

Tailor-made in wood

Flat-packs, DIY - forget it. Commission a cabinet for a perfect fit. Rhiannon Batten finds the man for the job

material, or simply want to replace that maddening self-assembly wardrobe whose doors have oever quite meet, you could well be hitting the highstreet furniture stores today. But finding something to fit that tricky alcove precisely could be a square peg/round hole sconario that you could well do without. Fortunately, custom-made furniture need not come with a dizzyingly exclusive price tag.

Believing that a gap existed in the market for bespoke furniture, Andrew Stanley began woodworking business in Londoo's East End in 1989. The prices are serious - recent commissions include an oak bookcase, at £2,100, double wardrobe in English oak, at £2,400, and a maple sittingroom unit for £3,400 - but the absence of high overheads and store rentals means that they bear comparison with off-the-

chosen materials as well as size and fitting. Since Mr Stanley and his col-

leagues are as concerned with the pleasure of working with wood as with turning a profit, they will take on almost anything. "We even made a bath and hand-basin out of teak last year. It was, in fact, a great success," he says. "Much of our work is undertaken for architects. I suppose the most ceceotric architect's commission we've had recently was replacing a classical column on the exterior of a house; somehow. it had been stolen. Of course, we also work direct for retail customers, and we keep our costs down because pieces are sold direct to the customer rather than through a shop."

When a customer comes to a hespoke furniture maker, the company will discuss a design and then produce an illustration

functionality of it all; it's essential to get right details of things such as drawers." This is partly because there is precious little room for error. The cost of raw materials is about onethird of the price of the finished product. For some woods, suchas teak, and for sprayed, pigmented lacquer finishes, the

cost can be even higher. From agreement of the plan to completion of the commission will take about eight weeks, depending on materials and labour. seem to take that long.

Andrew Stanley himself started working life as an accountant, but found creative carpentry more to his liking. One of his first orders in those early years was for a set of 66 leather and oak chairs to be installed in the Great Hall of Lincoln's Inn in central London. The work was produced to

Whether you are the sort of peg prices. Furthermore, you get and an estimate. "On approval, match the original period fur-pieces vary enormously in both niture; this has become some-scope and style. Walking around company's, and is often a requirement of clients.

> The Nineties have brought their own problems to be solved. Mr Stanley says that much thought has to be given to work such as disguising computer trunking behind Gothic panels, and building secret panels into furniture. It is this variety, he adds, that is one of the main joys of his job - he relishes the prospect of a challenge.

Producing similar pieces of furniture time after time is a less attractive option for Mr Stanley than, for example, time spent puzzling over a joh for the cloakrooms of the Middle Temple, in the legal hub of the cap-ital. The difficulty to be grappled with here was the designer's vision of suspended timber shapes supported by glass and steel -"it was intriguing to implement this," says Mr Stanley.

likely to come across solid, elegant and understated shelving units for a modern warehouse conversion as you are to find the flamboyant excesses of a cere-

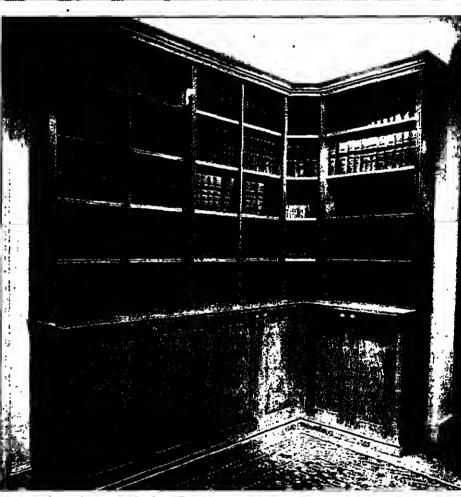
monial table inlaid with solid silver. Much of the work revnives around cabinet-making but orders can also consist of more mundane window frames, doors and cupboards. Mr Stanley is keen to point out his tradesmanlike approach, whereby pieces are primarily functional rather than artistic. "Without imposing on a client's taste, I try to guide the non expert towards designs I know from experience will work and will suit the build-

Andrew Stanley Woodworking is at 6A King's Yard, off Carpenter's Road, London E15 2HD (tele-The company's finished phone and fax: 0181-533 6199).

ing," says Mr Stanley. But if you

insist upoo stripped pine -

that's no problem.



Plane and simple: one of Andrew Stanley's traditional oak bookcases - priced at £2100

DON'T MISS TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

TRAVEL

WALK THE EARTH

Hiking, trekking, scrambling. From the Pennines to Crete

plus

A short stay in Istanbul





- 11 declared Minerum weight: 10st 7th, True h'cap weights: Mysockt 10st 2th, Adilov 10st 1th, Western Chief 9st 13th,
BETTING: 3-1 Sersum Cords, 7-2 Pher From Funny, 4-1 Mrs. Em, 5-1 Eriking, 15-1 Bad Bestrich,
Thunderpolat, Maglicul Blows, 12-1 lists Daven, 14-1 Myostis, Adilov, 15-1 Western Chief
1997 Jone (Ang S 11 3 Capt D Alers-Harkay (7) 7-2 (F) Bucklar) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE

MAS EM has shown a marked preference for fester ground but the mare is fencied to have the pace to bedt these in the hands of the capable Dominic Alers-Hankey efter the tests decent second to Never in Debt at Taunton, Sursum Conda and Pher From Funtases decent second to Never in Debt at Taunton, Surroum Contal and Phier From Funny are the other pair getting the expert assestance from the eaddle. Christian Ward Thomes
is aboard Sursum Contal, who has top form over longer trips and now in his first handcap, He would probably have beaten Good Lord Murphy at Warwick but for tipping up
two out so so his chance must be respected even if the trip is on the short side for him.
Phar From Funny is with Offie Elwood, and a fifth to Dines at Wincanton in January wee
a promising effort, He rever won when lightly-raced last season but rases an obvious threat
if anywhere near back to his best, Erfluing, an unflucky loser when a lest-tlight tailer at
Antree in November, was a fair second to course specialist Tickerty's Gift at Linghet less
time.

HYPERION

SWAY, ADMISSION: Club C14: Tattersalls C10 (OAPs CS), CAR PARK: Free

3.20 Petite Risk

4.20 Fin Bec

3.50 Madison County

Chepstow

1.15 Siberian Mystic

2.45 Sparkling Cone

GOING: Soft.

1.45 Sail By The Stars

2.15 Simons Castle (nb)

Colinical Soft.
 Left-hand, undulating course with stiff fences.
 Recectourse is on A488. Chapetow real station

ı	Ī,	3.30	EBF "NH" NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE FINA	L C4
ı.	E		TI (CC422 M) TTS 1000 SOCIAL SILE LINARE ELL'	11-
	1	4-0211	RED CURATE (21) (D) Fairs M Turner 6 C White) G McCourt 7 TI TO	Liter S Damack (#)
		Des	k green, red epoulets, red shower, dark green archite, dark green and red h	coped cap
	2	0-6P31	RACKETBALL (25) (Mrs 6 Territor) N Twister-Davies 5 11 10	C Liowelly a
			Grey, and plaques, black and and chack cop	
	3	1-210)	COUNTRY SEAU (23) (C) Data J J Pappett) J King 6 ft 8	FI Dustrettody
			Light blue, white stripe and armists	
	4	1220	SIGLENSE (12) (BF) (Ciris D Cahert) T Enstatly 8 Tl 4	L Wyor
			Yadow, royal blue olice, stripped steeres and cap	-
	5	·11FF0	MOISY MINER (18) (D) (Mrs R J Stan) D Nicholson 8 Tl 4	A Magaire
			Light blue and royal blue clabolo light blue sleeker and cap	
	8	22 5	CLINTON (82) (E N Thomas) K Saley 7 11 2	N WMerseon
			White, dark green triple dismand and dismand on cap	
	7	654311	MONTROE (22) (CD) (Mss Menel Taines) If Rome 8 11 2	D O'Sulken
1			Yellow, green striped shower, yellow cap.	
	8	3F013t	ARDENT SCOUT (78) (D) (R Malich Mas A Stone) Mrs S Smith 8 1/9	
	-		White, black sealers, insure allowes, making and white hosped cap	
	9	242	MASTER PILERIM (21) (J M Konself) O Salding 6 to 17	
	-		Owner, black ensules, black and process halved sisteres, black cap	
	10	2-1211	JESSICA ONE (59) (NY H Strengor) Mrs M Revoley 7 10 6	_ M A Fizzanid
•			Royal bike, martion such, Bolt bise alongs, light bise and reproof quarters	of cap
	ħ	03-61	NEVER IN DEET (23) (N H Clough) A Hoston 6 108.	noteroof A
•			Light green, purple change, armiets and cup	
1	12	OPISU2	TAKE COVER (22) (A and M Berneld M-Templans 7 10 4	R Thornton
			Gray, black seets, proy alcohol.	
	13	F1214	CHARLEY LAMBERT (28) (D) (R M Michell C G Savele) J Mache 7 To S.	EHasband (3)
			Purple, red assame, striped cap	
	14	180	JOE BUZZ (28) (Joe Buzzea) F Vurphy 8 10 2	Mr D McPhail (5)
			Plank and white theback, black alleges, white arribots, black 080	
	15	2-0:63	CHURCHTOWN GLEN (45) (J.6 C Tiplon) 8 Brockshaw 6 10 1	C Macda
			Yellow, purple hoops, purple aleeses	
	15	53503	THE FULL MONTY (8) (The Nutry Partnership) C Brooks S To 1	D Geologica
			Rouel blue, white tricle cliemand and armiets, white cap, rouel blue diams	and .
	17	P-2102	JET FILES (23) (D) (BF) (Lot Stationery Co) Mrs J Pleman 7 to 0	والعما كسيب
			Gold, black hours, housed day	
	16	P-0110	MR SOJANGLES (16) (U) (Mrs D Counts) I Williams 7 TO 9	S Powell
			Yellow, purple atripe, hooped alsever and cap	
			- 18 declared -	

- 16 centered Minimus weight: 10st. True handcap weight. Hispingles Set 12th.
BETTING: 8-1 Country Sees, 7-1 Jeseics One, 8-1 Recharted, Montroe, 10-1 Red Cusate, Clinton,
72-1 Joe Buzz, 14-1 Never in Debt, 16-1 Arcient Scaut, Skillwise, Noisy Minet, 20-1 Jet Flee, Meater Piggrin, Cherley Lambert, 25-1 others
890: no conservation and

FORM GUIDE

COUNTRY BEALI is a dual winner on the course and sure to like this longer trip having started off in bumpers (wins at Kempton and Newbury). The first 5th has to be defied but what beats the talenaid gelding is the winner on the evidence of his impressive first win here from Stycab and Bracey Run. Richard Durwoody again takes the ride and he stays with him instead of Minothroe, twice a winner with Durwoody area at this to Country Beau here for which he is allowed 6th for the 14-length beating. Red Curate makes no appeal, but Raciostall can be considered if he stays because he reversed Humbing-don form with the selful Decoupage when changed front-running tacies were employed at Bangor. From the stable that won with The Proms on the course yesterday, Raciostali is a leading contender at the weights. Cliston is a decent acri who beat Mourisin Starm at Kempton and help back from a rest after facing a stiff test when fifth to Dawn Leader at Cheltenham. The stablet horses run well when fresh an Ciriton is in with a shout. Notay Milner is to good to decount, but Anderd Scout is against better horses compared to Wetherby on Boxing Day. Master Piligrim and Jet Files have to improve on their form here before Country Seals.

Selection: COUNTRY SEALs

4.05 SUNDERLANDS IMPERIAL CUP HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £30,000 added 2m 110yds

_		Penalty Value £21,495	
ι	003403	BLOWING WIND (FR) (45) (F A Deat) M Pipe 5 ft 10	A PMcC
		Dark bitte, yellow cross-balls, coller and cuffs, striped cap	
2	-TI204	NAHRAWALI (26) (D) (C F Spanowhark) G L Moore 7 ft 7	.M Swichelor (
		Orange, brown and orange hosped alsevers, crempe cap, brown star	
3	11-232	ALASANG (49) (D) (BF) (Site Record) Mss. J Carrecto 7 ft 4	C Brad
		While, large black apple, black cap	
4	0-1143	SERENCES (19) (D) (W V M W 6 Mm E S Robins) N Handerson 6 11 3	_M A Filtronia
		Orange, black epoidets, black and orange striped shows black cap, orange	
5	PDP/63	DEBUTANTE DAYS (14) (CO) (Mrs 5 Brasher) Mais H Kinght 6 Ti 3	R Durasco
		Yellow, pusple apocs, yellow cap	
6	60-231	KINGSFOLD PET (7) (D) (George Nye Partnership) M Hoyese 9 11 2	C Lievel
		Fleid, black alseves, red cap, black dismond	
7	12-211	MORDANCE PRINCE (18) (CD) (Pirks Gym Ltd) Mas V Williams 7 11 2	N WELLIN
		Black, pink cross-belts, black alseves, pink atam	
8	5-5433	STAR SELECTION (42) (II) (R M Michel) J Macde 7 11 0	_E Husband
		Pink, white chework and sleaves, light blue cap	
9		DAVERGOLD (21) (D) (Circular Distributors Ltd) M Chennon 6 10 9	
		Royal blue disc, royal blue sleaves, white auxiets, light blue and white hoops	d cap
10	22223	HOUSE OF DREAMS (25) (D) (J 8 M Leisure Ltd) C M Moore 8 10 7	A Hoge
		Pupile, white accree and star on cap	
T	0-1223	REGENCY RAKE (72) (D BF) SAX J J McGettigart A L T Moore (+) 6 103	F M Berry (
		Royal blue, white chances and chances on decrees, white cap	
2	183/00	RUBHAHLMESH (49 (D) (Lone Star Partnershp) M R Bodey 7 10 4	L Herv
		Orange, black star and sleaves	
ß	26-14P	SILENT CRACKER (61) (BIF) (Start Partners) M Parren 8 10 4	Mr S Durack
		Gold, royal blue war, check cap	
14	631	HOH EXPRESS (88) (D) (Platinum Syndrode Ltd) Mrs J Remeden (102	
		Royal blue, white sing hopped slasses, quartered cap	
5	Q1211L	SADLER'S REALM (72) (D) (B O Racing) P Hobbs 5 TO 1	C Torre
		to defect how how severe with large severely often from the other how and the	

Royal blue and white flathedt, white stander, royal blue anome, red and white check cap

—15 declared —

BETTING: 8-1 Bitwing Wind, 6-1 Nordance Prices, 7-1 Hob Express, 8-1 Alabang, 16-1 Regency
Reice, Robbabunder, Rebravent, 12-1 Sadier's Reich, 14-1 Secretae, House Of Oreans, Debutions

Ouya, Kingstold Pet, 29-1 Star Selection, 25-1 Desegold, 50-1 Silect Cracker

1997: Carino Brigante 5-1) 0 J Caborne 10-1 (P Webber) 16 nor

FORM GUIDE

The one funcied to come off a fast pace to collect is HOH EXPRESS, a very tasty Flat hendicepper on his day when with fan Beiding and a progressive type over hundes after just three rurs. He duty took the easter opening at Museaburgh other Urbanber and Wetherby, and his turn of foot in the hends of Bartin Person has to be greatly respected off this feather weight. Meritin Pipe has been running Blowing Wind in some strong races. He's a winner in France but if a do well to with this under that 10%. Ante-pool support for Rubhahuniah is interesting. He ram with a big resignt behind Dines at Wincerton lest time and can be given a opeak att only 10st 4th today on his old winning form at New-bury. Ausbeang did a stake better then Servanse and Natrawell when second to Stefrur at Kernston after his third here to Major Jamle. Alabang, with his rock-solid form and with the ground looking clay for him, rates a sound each-way be. Nordence Prince is in fine form but he probably wants the ground to be taske, while House Of Dreams carries have in top nick after the win at Cesterick and Adrian Maguere is a cracking booking. Sedien's Realist would seem to lave a storn test in this grade, but his hader Regional Rules was a soft-ground where a fair-phouse in November and has only 10st 5th, But the one most Book to hunt up Hoir Express is Debutante Days, who won three times on the Rat last year. The many wasn't degraced on two turns last month and, with Richard Dunwoody taking a rare ride for Hernietta Knight, Debutante Days is desirably in with a fine chance. FORM GUIDE

Selection: HOH EXPRES	5
4.40 THAMES DITTON HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS C.1 C) 29,000 3m 110yds Penalty Value 26,302	• }
1 F-FISP AARDHOLF (45) (CD) (Lady Carella Demoster) C Books 7 12 9 & Books	1
2 SPOPR GREENHIL TARE AMAY (7) (0) fals: PF Paynet P Hobbs 10 11 8C Limentlyn. Royal blue and yellow final-soft, redow storves, royal blue artifles, royal blue casp	- 1
3 1921P CAROLES CRUSADER (72) (1) (No. C Scientific) D Gendalio 7 11 7	- 7
4 22-25 SHSH STAMP (72) (3) (3F) (Path) (Thoras) F Morphy 8 (1 S	•
8 -24.5 ELROSY (25) (D) (Northin Cooper) R Rowe S D S Rommon Alexandr, guider agricult, quartered cap	7
8 41P-75 DENVER BAY (as) (CD) (Bit Neptor) J Girbard II 10 12 Aspekt (9
7 #504-P PASHTO (1977) Programmi Routh) N Henderson 11 10 11	4
8 4P-OPS MONTECOT (FR) (37) (SIV) (S	*
3 11/975 SHINNING FOUNTAIN (5) (D) (D M Foreign D M Foreign D TS	9 }
10 -1P55 MENESONIC (72) (I)) (Mrs W H Water) R Alter 8 TO 1	•
TI 32P-PP HARPISTOWIN LADY (192) (IV) Flager J Specore) C Belding 11 10 0 B Feedon Overgue, black citeron, artipod delenne, black cap — 11 declared —	В
Adhimum swight: 10st. Two handloop swight: Harristown Lady Bat 10th. BETTING: 8-4 Eulogy, 7-2 Menesonic, 5-1 Carolina Crusenier, 8-1 Aardwolf, 10-1 Pashto, 12-1 Ha	۱.

Admired seight foot froe hastices easily therestoen lark but 10th. Plantho, 12-1 Harristone Lark, Greenhill Dre Ausry, Irish Bitmip, Detreer Biry, 20-1 Montecot, Shining Fountain 1997: Searlies 9:10 ft. D Bridywaist 4-1 (F Hobber) 7 sin.

FORM GUIDE

This has a smalk took shout it with Robert Aher's MENESONIC in with a great chance off a feather weight. Meneachic locked a promising sort when he threshed Existation Liene at Wincertion in October and he'll do in the league against modest seasoned performens. Eddogy, on Aeodo winner from Amaho in this responsarion, at the assured securits. He can easily be fancied after some decent showings in good novices, and has Richard Durwoody to help. Eulogy did better then Meneachic (12th better off) when second to Ottows at Winnessen in November Assistantia is to do with 12st, as does Carobr's Crusader with 11st. To in her first-time visco. Deriver Bay Rest this course but he may not be good enough against the two principals, but Peatho can althe when their but has something to prove in the staying department. Improvement is possible from Hamistonen Lady, while Staining Fountain is well thought of and from the stable of dual winner Ott Smartie.

	5.1	5 HMS SANDOWN STANDARD OPEN NH (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m 110yds Penaity	FLAT RACE
•		(CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty	Value £7,445
	1	ELVIS (The Chap Ourse) L Wals 5 ti 4	X Abgraro [5]
	2	TECNI IN 1 date D M I make P Indian S T 4	M Richards
٠	3	O JUSTUCE ALONE (ST) (The Popper Partnershall D Nicholson 5 to 4	
	4	MONS WARRIOR Claim Woods, N Baithage 5 11 4	
	5	4 QUICKSWOOD (22) Planey Speciel Charvel 5 11 4	8 Fenton
	8	ROCK NY ROLL STAR (Four Owners & A Receivage) L Wells 8 11 4	A Thorrison
	7	SANTARLESS (D.S. Arnold & D.J. Goodman) M Perren 5 11 4	
	6	2 STEEPLES LAD (22) (Mrs Lorre Berryment) N Twiston-Device 5 11 4	C Liverbye
	6	STEWARTS PRIDE & H Fligh & Brodelium 5 11 4	
	10	STONE'S THROW MY 8 Mrs F C Welchill A Barry D Micholson 5 11 4.	A Meguly
	11	WRIGLEY'S Dates A Card A Cond 5 ti 4	Powel
	12	ff BELISARO (1) Paul D. Jacobs) N Gerham 4 11 3	L Wyer
	13	9 FINDON FLYER (22) (Unstable Companions) J GRoud 4 10 10	P Hide
	34	MEPLINS BAY Clore Packett J (Blant 4 10 t)	Aspet (5)
	5	2 NEWBY END (33) (JD Brownigg) M Madgarick 4 10 TO.	Goldstein (7)
		0 SOUTHDOWN LAD (24) (The Exclusive Partnershad) R Rose 4 to 10	
	77	TUDOR KING (JR Kinlady J King 410 10	
	16	JUST ZOLA (E.W. Jones) M Saunders 4 10 5	
	12	MY TERN & Dutton, F Fort, D State of L Wells 4 105	
	20	0 PASSWORD (16) 64s J 8 E Turnet) M Sounders 4 10 5	

BETTING: 4-1 Steeples Led, 5-1 Todor King, 8-1 Steep's Torox, 8-1 Belliserio, Iron ND, 10-1 Septebless, 12-1 Justice Aldon, Steeps to Frida, 14-1 Rock N° Roll Star, My Tern, Rodon Plyer, Martins Say, Monx Merrior, Dictio

● John O'Shea may leave it until the eve of the race to book a jockey for Cheltenham Gold Cup contender Go Ballistic. But the trainer is refusing to panie at the lack of a definite rider for the gelding, fourth in the race last year, A new pilot could be needed as regular partner Mick Fitzgerald has been claimed for Rough Quest in Thursday's contest. And Tony Dobbin, who steered the aineyear-old to victory in last month's Jim Ford Chase at Wincanton is set to be on The Grey Mouk. But O'Shea's assistant Earmon Redmond stressed: "We are not bothered about the jockey. "We won't know for definite who will ride until next Tuesday or Wednesday but I am sure there will be plenty of other top jockeys available. We are very happy with Go Ballistic and we would be very pleased if the ground dries up a bit. If it was good going I see un reason why he shouldn't improve on last year." Go Ballistic is 25-1 for the Gold Cup with Ladbrokes.

2.45 CLIVE GRAHAM NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added

3.20 TOTE PLACEPOT HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) ES,500

Punters' Guide

1.15: Mon Anne has excellent crodentials and could defy a hike in the weights. Zander's chance is hard to assess after an absence of more than four months. Quistaquay performed bedly when favourite at Fontwell three weeks ago. SIBERIAN MYSTIC has yet to show her best form in the mud. but this grey marc, the race's youngest contestant, looks best.

000 1.45: Brave Highlander must carry 91b more than his proper hand-icap mark, and the Josh Gifford stable is in the doldrums. The poor recent form of Jenny Pitman's yard could also count against Id-lot's Lady. Belmont King has yet to recapture last year's form. SAIL BY THE STARS is the safest bet. α

2.15: Effectual's persistent tailswishing, again evident in victory on soft ground at Doncaster last weekend, does not seem to affect his prowess. It is of concern, though, that the stable a condi-tional rider Shane Kelly cannot claim his 7lb allowance today. Tony McCoy is aboard SIMONS CASTLE, a Lingfield winner last month, and can make this count.

SANDOWN 2.55: SURSUM CORDA lacks the experience of many of his rivals but has put in solid performances, no-tably when third at Wawick last time. Mrs Em woo four of her six completed starts over burdles last season and has clear prospects.

3.30: The Sandown turf is often very holding at this time of year and several of today's fancied runners won in good style here lately, is the would not want any more rain. One

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

of them is Country Beau, who disappointed on soft going here in January. Red Curate carries the biggest burden in a highly compensive final, but does have the assistance of smart 5lb claimer Seamus Durack. MASTER PILGRIM is an interesting contender now Toby Balding's yard seems to be hitting form.

4.05: Judging the ability of Blow-ing Wind is very difficult. He fin-ished alongside Champion Hurdle-class runners at Haydock in January but even Martin Pipe said he was flattered. Sadler's Realm likes the mud and will surely be challenging at the finish. An outsider worth each-way support. however, is STAR SELECTION. John Mackie's runner has made a quiet start over jumps but was decent on soft ground on the Flat.

4.40: EULOGY has thrown away winning chances because of dodgy jumping. Richard Dunwoody takes over today, however, and it is worth relying on his skills to get his mount into the winner's enclosure.

WOLVERHAMPTON 4.25: REFUSE TO LOSE, who turned a competitive-looking 1m handicap into a procession when solling home 7 lengths clear of Plan For Profit at Lingfield last time, re-mains on a fair handicap mark and obvious danger.

Imperial C	υþ		V-)	Ca		110			_	
A THE RESIDENCE OF THE	1988	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	9
Pate of the byourites:	_2_		_3_	_11	_3_		- 8_		<u>a</u> _	_2
Winner's place in betting	E D	1	_0_	D	2ي	_1_	_ 9	2	_2_	_ 9
Starting prices:	10-1	3-1	20-1	15-1	9-2	64	33-1	8-1	5-1	10-
Witaning ages:	5	8	3	5	7	6	8	5	5_	_ 5
Winning weights:	10.11	100	10,13	105	104	100	11.7	102	108	100
Profit or lose to £1 stak	e: Fev	ourite	-£3.	50. Se	cond	Favor	rites :	£4.25		
Percentage of wirmers										
Shortest-priced winner		_								
Longest-priced winner:			_						•	
						993)				

First show

IN the 3.30 st Sandown, Churchtown Glen is a toppriced 20-1 with Coral and the Tote - Ladbrokes go 11-1 while Joe Buzz is 14-1 with Ladbrokes - William Hill go 9-1. In the 4.05 at Sandown, Regency Rake is a top-priced 10-1 with William Hill - Ladbrokes offer just 7-1. In the 4.25 at Wolverhampton White Plains is 9-1 with Ladbrokes and the Tote -Coral go just 6-1.

lan Davies

					- 1
San	dov	m 3.	30		1 1
Human	C	H	L	T	H
Hed Corete	8-1	8-1	5-1	1-2	ļL
Country Beau	6-1	7-1	6-1	8-1	[_
Moreon	7-1	6-1	7-1,	8-1	1
lessics Con	7-1	8-1	9-1	84	1
Rackatheft.	8-1	10-1	11-1	B-1	11
he Pazz	D-1	9-1	14-1	104	1
Nover to Dubt	14-1	14-1	12-1	21	11
Californ	17-1	16-1	121	14-1	l
Anderit Scoot	18-1	164	16-1	14-1	11
Hester Pilgrico	14-1	16-1	18-1	15-1	
Charley Lambert	20-1	16-1	20-1	20-1	H
Charthous Glan	20-1	14-1	11-1	204	
loley Miner	20-1	16-1	· 18-1	20-1	н
ir Bolungius	25-1	25-1	254	16-1	1
A Spring	20-1	20-1	25-1	25-1	
Main Cover	25-1	20-1	20-1	25-1	1
let Files	25-1	20-1	20-1	16-1	
he Roll Morey	25-1	25-1	32.2	334	

7-1 9-1 9-1	71	8-1 9-1	7-1 18-1
84		_	
	10-1	74	
44.4		7-1	<u>8-1</u>
11-1	9-1	0-1	91
14-1	14-1	2.1	14-1
21	14-1	31-1	B-1
22-1	21	14-5	74.7
14-1	14-1	141	14-1
14-1	14-1	12-1	16-1
25-1	25-1	25-1	20-1
25-1	28-1	40-1	33-1
50-1	50-1	50-1	50-1
to fo	odds. p	hoes f,	2.3
nHL L	طاعيا	des T	Pate
	24 24 141 141 251 251 501	24 144 144 144 144 254 254 264 504 504 504 504 504	21 141 11-1 221 221 14-3 14-1 14-1 14-1 14-1 14-1 12-1 25-1 25-1 25-1 25-1 25-1 40-1

Sandown 4.05

Blowing Wind 92 51 11-2 92

Mordanza Prince 54 6-1 13-2 6-1

241

 Σ .

Wolver	ham	ptor	4.2	5
Horse	C	N	L	:
Gal Sand	11-2	11-2	5-1	5-
Ratine to Loss	9-2	11-2	51	_0
Feetk	B-2	6-1	5-1	11-
Varob	8-1	13-2	64	11-
White Plains	6-1	7-1	9-1	9
Westmin's Weigh	11-1	11-1	11-1	. 10-
Just Loui	D-1	12-1	12-1	_ 11 .
Creaty Chief	16-1	104	14-1	12-
Hour Golf Glory	14-1	16-1	15-1	16-
Uraz Major	18-1	12-1	14-1	_#
Thronispedie	16-1	16-1	19-1	16-
Rembo Waltzer	14-1	12-1	12-1	20-
Nomore Mr Micagu	25-1	25-1	16-1	25

Results

J Prost E

AYH
2.10: 1. STORM CALL () Jardine) 20-1;
2. The Client 10-11 fay; 3. Camza 20-1 13
ran. 1½, 5; () Whilliams). Toke: £30.07; 52-70;
£100; £2.00 DP: £28.00 CSP: £34.63, This;
£32.70.
2.45: 1. WELSH MARCH (J Calaghan)
5-6 fay; 2. Rachaet's Owen 5-4; 3. Single
Sourcing 16-1.5 ran. 6; 16; (G M Moore).
Toke: £170; £100; £250 DP: £100, CSP: £206,
3.20: 1. SIRKDALE (R Supple) 11-8 fay;
2. Attacket 11-4; 3. Cash Box 9-2.4 ras.
1½, dat. ft. Lumon). Tota: £220, DP: £22.60.

Each way a counter the odds, places 1, 2, 3, 4

C-Cord. H-Willem Hill. L-Lathertes, T-Tale

11/4, GRE. [L. Lungo]. Tobe: 22.20. DF: 22.20. CSF: BUT.

2.55: 1. NICHOLAS PLANT (S Taylor) 7-2;

2. Mir Knibart 5-2; 3. Titten Their 8-1. 4 ren.
18-8 fav Jymjum Johnny (pulled up). 3, 3, 1, 1
Goldiel, Tobic: BUSIN DF: \$140. CSF: EXID.2,

4.25: 7. HOWATMAN (Mr. K. Anderson)
8-13 fav; 2. Busic's Delight 7-2; 3. Aretic
Lander 8-1 7 ran. 8, 65t. (K. Anderson). Rote:
PLSO; E240. E10. DF: £2.20. CSF: £330. MR;
Tarten Tradevinds.

5.00: 1. GOSPEL SONG: 0 Jardino) 8-1;

2. Segala 11-2; 3. Kübun King 7-2; 8 ran.
11-4 fav Martid (80). 7, 12. (A Whitman). Rote:
FUSIC: £250, £300, £250. DF: £2130. CSF:
948.17, Nicest: £1850. Quadroct £4330.
Place 8: £4852. Place 5: £2634.

MADINGET DACETM. . MARKET RASEN

**MARKET RASEN

1.50: 1. RAMBO TANGO (Garry Lycra)
16-1; 2. Chromenou Stick 4-1; 3. Direc's Mistral 11-2.9 ran. 8-4 fav Dutch Dysare (Mt).
14. 2% (B. Cambidge). Tota: 22/17; 53:20.
19.0. 22.0. DF; 1955:0. CSF: 572/54. Those:
1986.83. Thic: 10065.0.
2.25: 1. COOL SPOT (R. Johnson) 4-1;
2. Methaging 9-4 fav; 2. Fair And Pancy 19-6;
5 ran. 14. 7. (S. Bright). Tota: 25:00; 11:50.
19. 20.0. CSF: 29.85.
3.00: 1. NICHOL FIFTY (AP McCoy) 5-2;
2. Bernburgh Boy 7-2; 3. Torn Stat. 13-8 fav.
10 ran. 4, 44-10. (M. Tornjohn). Prote: 23:30;
11-0; 1. NICHOL FIFTY (AP McCoy) 5-2;
2. Bernburgh Boy 7-2; 3. Torn Stat. 13-8 fav.
10 ran. 4, 44-10. (M. Tornjohn). Prote: 23:30;
11-0; 1. NICHOL FIFTY (AP McCoy) 5-2;
2. Bernburgh Boy 7-2; 3. Torn Stat. 13-6.
10 ran. 4, 44-10. (M. Tornjohn). Prote: 23:30;
11-0; 1. Horiton
2. 27. NR: Heritage.
3.30: 1. DAWN MISSION (L. Wyer) 8-1;
2. Priluted To Fische 10-1; 3. Signen Wireless 5-1. 6 ran. 2-1 fav Pethagin, 5. 2. (T. Ess
arby). Tota: 2-1 fav Pethagin, 5. 2. (T. Ess
arby). Tota: 2-1 fav Pethagin, 5. 2. (T. Ess
arby). Tota: 2-1 fav Pethagin, 5. 2. (T. Ess
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arby). Tota: 2-1 fav Pethagin, 5. (T. Ess
arby). Tota:

SANDOWN

ETU, ETSO, DF: 53690, CSF: 58469, Tric. ETOSBO.

3.45: 1. GOOD LORD MURPHY (F DURWOOD) 11-4: 2. Tom Tallor 10-1; 3. Sum Alart 14-1.5 ren. 5-2 for King's Barrior (rel).

2. 8. (F Hobbs). Tota: 52.70; Etu!, 52.70; Etu!, 52.71; 52.00; DF: 528.00 CSF: 525.75. Tric. 529.00; NR: Morgans HS.

4.16: 1. BRABES OF MAR (Mejor G Barrior) 16-1. BR Jackpot: £22,52360 - part won. Pool of £94574 carried forward to Sandown today. Placepot: £10010. Outedpot: £29,70. Place 6: £5552. Place 5: £67,8.

 Jimmy McCarthy was yesterday banned for five days after easing down Torn Silk on the run-in of the novices' hurdle at Market Rasen and losing second place to Lorcan Wyer on Barnburgh Boy by a short bead.

INDEPE		
RACING	SERV	ICES
LIVE COMMEN	40 I	THE SULTS
SANDOWN	971	981
CHEPSTOW	972	982
AYR	973	983
WOLVERHAMPTON	974	984
0891 2	5 RESUI	TS 70

● LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 44 withers from 196 numers (22.4%), P Hobbs 22-86 (25.6%), N Twiston-Devies 21-115 (86.3%), P Nicholis 19-84 (22.6%). LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 32-19 (289%), C Liawellys 16-67 (185%), R Johnson 12-59 (203%), W Marston 12-67 (179%). ● FAVOURITES: 159 wars in 388 races (40.9%). BLINKERED FIRST TIME: (visored, 240). 1.15 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS BBCI

Bangor run lost Morch, when he split Darakshan and Morpheus in a tight finish with cut in the ground, was another good effort and he has the scope to defy top weight. Taking of scope, the late developer Mon Antile has improved with every run and might have been chasing a fine-timer of a pur holding his attrup leather health broken at Worcester in June. The form of his subsequent Lingfletd win lest morth is working out and there is no danger of the coming too soon after dotting up at Warwick lest Beauriay, but he is taking on a docent sort in Zandor. Even so, he couldn't be in better shape and should will go close again. Siberten Mystel came from of the pace and finished strongly behind Mon Anne's clablemate Never in Debt and Mrs Em over a furlang less on much listler ground at Taurston last time. The witner looking about and wondering made it seem as if she firethed faster than she did and she will find this stiff course much more of a test of stamins on this ground against horses that will stay three miles. Calabaquery won at Towoseter earlier in the season and came back to winning form when finding softer ground at Forthwell in January, She's a consistent mare who stays well and come well too the recovering with her ident stang a handy 5to off. Alnet Soit II handles this ground well but should have he limitations exposed.

1.45 TOTE TEN TO FOLLOW HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £15,000 added 3m 2f 110yda £9,968 BBCI 1 21-FFF BELMORT KNIG (14g (C)) (this Bills Bird.) P Nichola 10 H (8)
pick, black braces, balled steness, pick cap, black diament
2 2-4999 EXEMPE (FFG (16) (D A. Johnson) M Pipe 8 H 4
Royal black, consolid great steness, white cap, ement great apolit
3 U-SIII SAU BY THE STAYES (ET) (T F F Nort) T Forstor 8 10 1.
dark great and consolid great steness, consolid state and cap
4 2-644 ENOT'S LADY (21) (D) (Mat J Chart) black J Phram 8 10 0 hosp weights: kilof's Lack that 11th, Draw Hightendar Set St., (Allestin Set 1th,

BETTING: 11-8 Sall By The Stars, 100-30 Endips, 9-2 Belatont King, 8-1 Idiots Lady, 7-1 Brave Haldander: 25-1 Killashin Highlander, 25-1 Riteable 1987. Givernime 9 to 1 L Harvey 11-4 (A Turnell) 7 ran FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

SAIL BY THE STARS steps up in grade but it is her doing it at present as opposed to the supposed stars Euclips and Belavont King, Last month's seven-langth defeat of General Pongo at Towcester was the triad win on the trot for the suph mans. She reliables the ground, has traproved as the has attoped up in disturce and gets enough weight to continue her sequence. Euclips is takent two rurer have been a long way below last seeson's Royal 8 SunAlizance second or his third bethind Suny Bey in the Hennessy Gold Cup in November. Until he recaptures that sort of form - and hot hinks been tried in befreight seeson - Euclips is probably been watched. The 1997 Sociation National whener Belanorit King has yet to complete the course in three attempts this season. He hadn't been tool-perfect beforefalling in Haydockis Greenalle National This is forbright ago though, like Euclipe, held go close on his best form and has at least won here. Idiot's Lady was beaten eight and a half lengths into fourth behind Ottowa at Uttorator last month only for the gap to widen when they met again here.

Selection: SAL 8Y THE STARS

2.15 SIR PETER O'SULLEVAN NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS B) £20,000 added 570 2m 110yds BBC1 BOLSHOI (POL) (K H Eng) M Maggratige 11 5 8 Carran
gold, disk green aboves, gold cap, dark green star
31211 EFFECTUAL (7) (D) (B C Docs) May V Williams 11 5 8 8 Carran
emands green, black hopps, halved aboves, emands green cap
(GFS MACHALIM (12) (bits Alexan Gambia) T George 11 5 9 A Johnson
oways, black observes, oways aboves, black awars, black and oways grammod cap
3-2021 SIMONES CASTLE (34) (D) (bits Balbane Macharin R) COSIGnen 11 5 A P McCoy
yellow, royal black hopp, royal black aboves, yellow amales, quantized cap
321 SOLOMAN (87) (D) (FI Filled) J Officia 11 6 9 P Histe
SOLOMAN (87) (D) (FI Filled) J Officia 16 9 P Histe helpor pjecy poole hooke helpor steamer pjecy seem

BETTING: 7-4 Elluciusi, 2-1 Solonum, 9-4 Simone Custs, 10-1 Macheliol, 59-1 Boletol 1997, What's The Verdict 5 17 5 C F Swen 13-8 far (A P OBner, 11) 9 nan FORMI GUIDE Venetic Williams is making hey with Effectual and the five-year-old is out again quickly ofter recording his fourth win in six outrage at Donosater last Seburday. He won easily in

dend there's likely to be still more improvement to come, as there surely is from a Castle and SOLOMAN, litting in front cost Simons Castle the race at Asoct in y when Gathex pounced close frome and he then made the most of Baharnian Stimons Castle and SOLOMAN, Iding in front cost Smorae Castle the race at Asoci in January when Gattles pounced dose from end he then made the most of Behamler Knight's slow jump at the test to hold on all out at Lingfield. With Behamler Knight going on at feriels second to Zerelasica at Newbury the form is decemt and he is bound to go close. Soloman tests the racing seperience of the other two but has given a good ac-count of himself in all times starts, firstly against Zeralasids at Asoct. Although belief the their Smorae Castle was, it not Webble Castle some time to was thin down at Asoct next time and he then won costly at Towcester.

1 PETITÉ RISK (12) (3) (A J Lorent) M Pipe 11 ().
F463 POREIGH RILE (3) (As Sunt McCarthy) J Arrivas 10 (2)
SUPIN CREEK (7) (0) (Lack base) P Proble (10)
SUPIN ANOTHER MIGHT (15) (Suntex Perhamble) P Murphy 10 3.
4. LIMEL (6HT (24) (2) (55) Petrosof P Murphy 10 3.
0054 OUTSILE OF MARKE (20) (0) (Jim West H Knight 10 0.
SEIPTI CRISCLE OF MARKE (20) (0) (Jim West H Knight 10 0.

- 7 declared. Minimum weight: 10st. True handloop weights: Chick of Mayic 9st 10th.
BETTING: 9-4 Pette Rink, 9-2 Lovellight, 5-1 Another (Right, 11-2 Steroa Creak, 6-1 Foreign Ricke
7-1 Circles Of Magist. 12-1 Chilbhiling
SSF: Shu Gea 4 17 9 J A McCartiny 2-1 far (O Shorwood) 5 ran 3.50 PETER DOBSON ALLEN MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 3f 110yds 1997: Donjum Colonges (191) 6 ff 4P Carberry 8-1 (T Foreign) 7 ran 4.20 COMMENTATOR'S MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS D) \$4,000 added 2m 4f 110yds HOBEL LAD (15) Names Herhold M Poe 4 to 12 VENETIAN SCENE (15) Ficherd Gren (Fice Paintings) M Poe 4 to 7 BETTIMO: 5-2 Veneties Scene, 7-2 Ring Peddy, 5-2 Nobel Lad, 5-1 Fin Sec, 6-1 Be Lacky Colin. 12-1 Bank Avenus, 25-1 attents 997: no corresponding size

Wolverhampton HYPERION 2.20 Naked Oat 2.50 Rockswain 3.25 Gral 3.55 Doubla Oscar 4.25 Refuse To Lose 5.00 Nikita's Star

GOING: Standard (All-weather track)
STALLS: Im 61 - outside; remainder - Inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 61 to 1m 41.

Fibresand surface; left-hand course.
Course is south-east of town on 182028. Rail station adjoins course.
ADMISSION: Cub 25: Tattersole 05 (OAP members of Demond Cub.

Free

LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinshiped 64 winners from 623 runners (193%), M Johnston 57-260 (219%), J Berry 45-308 (148%), P Hestiam 40-212 (193%), J Wester 69-279 (211%), S Sanders 44-349 (25%), G Carter 33-231 (143%), Dean McKeown 29-259 (112%), G FAVOURITES: 401 wins from 1236 races (32.4%), BLINGERED FIRST TIME: (visored, 330).

2.20 VICTORIA MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 1m 100yds 46 HULS GAMBLE (10) P Bergin 8 9 17 ____ KEY TO (137) C McCourt 467____ | Color | Colo

D Holland 11

2.50 NORTHERN TERRITORY SELLING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 3YO 6F 5-4321 RISKY WHISKY (24) (CD) J Barry 8 4. G Carter 4 8
43231 ROCKSWAR (7) (CD) P Heaten 9 4. J Wester 11
0-2533 MALOZZA (7) (CD) P Evers 8 13. J F Egen 11 AHEROE (16) & Paling 8 12 D4045 CAPE HOPE (52) J Alertural 8 12. ___C Timegree (3) 1

5 D404-5 CAPE HOPE (52) J Alectural 8 2. T Galletin 19
7 -00014 SNAMPPY TMES (40) (CD) M Code 8 12. A Clark 5 V
8 004-55 MARGICE (20) R Hollachard 8 7. Paul Eddery 9
9 525- PRECIOUS PRINCESS (62) (63) R Galletin 6 7. C Lorellow (3) 7
10 -03165 SN63 FOR ME (7) (0) R Hollachard 8 7. A McCactly (5) 2
10 04-55 STRAYSEA (22) 8 Burgh 8 7. R Leppis 8
11 04-25 STRAYSEA (23) 8 Burgh 8 7. R Leppis 8
11 declared 8ETTING: 100-30 Rockswath, 4-1 Richy Whatey, 5-1 Precious Princess, 6-1 Cape Hope, 5-1 Malcaza, 10-1 Sneppy Tiress, 12-1 Sleg For Me, Sky Mountain, Alperna, 14-1 Straysea, 25-1 Magglos

3.25 WESTERN AUSTRALIA STAKES (CLASS D) 25,000 added 1m 1f 79yds 4 20:13 GRALMAND (14) (C) N Literodes 38 11 ... 5 Whiburst 2 5 0004 MAGICAL SABA (250) W Hispans 38 5 ... Flynch 5 8 U203 BETTRON (140) R Hermon 38 1 ... 9 Calans 7 1 MONCHANIA (66) (C) J Spenng 38 0 5 Righton (7) 1 BETTING: 13-8 Grainment, 9-4 Channord Pares, 9-2 Bettren, 5-1 Monchania, 20-1 Protocol, 23-1 Silent Valley

3.55 J. S. WRIGHT HANDICAP (CLASS C) 28,000 added 5t A Clark 9 B
4 01-011 DOUBLE-O (17) (CD) W Jarve 4 9 D ... S Sanders 7 S
5 30-122 DOUBLE-O (CD) (KD) (CD) W Jarve 4 9 D ... S Sanders 7 S
6 12-325 CLASSY CLEO (KD) (CD) P E-941 3 S T ... AMCCardoy (C) T
7 1220 MUCE-LIO (KB) (C) Allored 3 S T ... A McCardoy (C) T0
8 1122 TBME TO RLY (T7) (CD) 8 Muney 5 S 12... D Seesons (C) T1 S
9 2820 PURE CONCODERCE (159 (C) G Least 3 S T)... Part Eddary 2

Minimum weight: 7st 10%. True handcap weight: Blue Klee 7st 9th, Feether-

1 Marie - Couble-O, 11-2 Pure Coincidence, 3-1 Classy Cisc, 7-1 Time y, 5-1 Double Georg, Cream GIE, 5-1 Magello, 10-1 Ansatzeno, 12-1 ustable, State Of Cardios, 14-1 Bold Ettert, 18-1 Bloe Die 4.25 ED WEETMAN LINCOLN TRIAL C4

added 1m 100yds

- 13 declared -

SETTING: 9-2 Gulf Shaad, 5-1 Hatters Rt Lose, 5-1 Feyls, 7-1 Yarob, 9-1 Westmarfs Weigh, 19-1 Just Lout, White Plains, 72-1 Rambo Weitzer, 14-1 Una Miljon News Golf Gory, 19-1 Comy Chief, Threadwords, 25-1 Romors To All

en a short break since he completed his hat-inch here in January. One that might just spring a surprise at a decent price is HEVER. BUT GIUTE His win in the Swedish 2000grs at Stockholm hert. June is difficult to weigh up, but beforehend held finished that in a Used race at Crierally and had good treaden form here. In his first nex the year, Hever Golf Glory was beaten by three recent winners when fourth to Stearwoller Startly at Lingfield and Darryll Heberd replaces the inseptenced appractice that note him that, day. Last year, Westman's Weight benefited from the move up to seven furtorigs, but held so at norme over that the and there must be a slight doubt at to whether hell be as offective over this extended mile. The completed win from Irojan Hero startings him as good as ever, though, and Adrian McCarthy's 5th allowence will help other the subsequent 5th rise. Rambo Weitzer is only 2b higher than he was when he won the corresponding handicap a year ago, white Crizry Chief is from that yard that won lest year's Lincoln with Ruesk Links after held frieshed fourth in the race. The trip looks on the short side for White Plains, and it might stretch Just Lout, while Threadneedle's two whis for Lord Huntingdon were in relatively weak claiming races. Selection: HEVER GOLF GLORY 5.00 TASMANIA HANDICAP (CLASS D) 1 226-71 JAMAICAN FLICHT (17) (C) Mrs SLamyman 5 10 0. US-221 NOUTAR (NO) (CD) R Hollesheed 7 68 ___ A McCarthy (S) 3

FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

Gulf Shead has been raised 12b for his five-length beating of Yarob over a slightly longer journey 10 days ago, and Refuse 10 Lose is up the same amount for his comeback win at Lingfield, where he readily curse clear of Pen For Profit and beat han seven lengths. There's no reason why they shouldn't go well agent, along with Feylik, an improved handicapper surfer the year and who has been given a short break since he completed his has-inck here in January. One that might hat smith a service set at leason clock in INEVEST.

مكذا من الاعل

Express to fly in for Ramsdens

THE REVIEW from Shake- champion trainer is 5-1 to send before next week's Cheltenham

The eight-year-old hummed round the gallops near Robin Dickin's Alscot Park yard at Stratford, though the trainer was not tempted to immediately elevate his chestmut to take on the titans in the Queen Mothwill instead remain in novice Chase in which he will be just about favourite. "He can only run in the Arkle once and, please God, he will be in next year's Champion," Dickin said rvesterday.

bullish, and Cheltenham is Cheltenham, but on the bare form of what they've all shown up to now Kadastrof will win the Arkle. There are a lot of unknowns. Edelweis Du Moulin hasn't beaten anything yet and who knows how good he could be? And I would be terrified of Champleve too.

"He [Kadastrof] worked fabulously this morning. He was as Blowing Wind himself was cut free as a bird and be looks a million dollars."

more unusual players at this year's Festival. He is a horse tracing's divisions, having won on in pub parlance, means they the Flat, over hurdles and over made a cock-up. fences. He likes to keep busy and has won six times this season already.

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THE RESERVE

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Perhaps Kadastrof's best offering this season came in defeat though when he finished a reached 7-1. close second to Ask Tom in the Game Spirit Chase at Newbury on St Valentine's Day. That winoer now heads the market for the Champion Chase and will not at least be crowded out in the two-mile championship following yesterday's decleration their last meal had been a cur-

There will be a maximum of 11 runners in next Wednesday's ceotrepiece, including past winners of the race in Klairon Davis and Viking Flagship. The contest is greatly flavoured by the inclusion of One Man, who has died a hornble death at each of the last two Festivals.

. There will be a relatively small field too for the same day's Royal & SunAlliance Chase. The presence of Ireland's latest wooderhorse, Florida Pearl, has scared off many opponents and the big horse will now have a maximum of 11 rivals, ensur-ving the smallest field for the race

since eight lined up in 1993. Martin Pipe, who has provided the winner of the race in Rolling Ball and Minnehoma. supplies a third of the cutry. In a book with Ladbrokes the

speare country was most upbeat out four winners at the meeting. yesterday as Kadastrof gave his as he did 12 months ago. He is last serious home performance 3-1 to saddle two or three winners and 6-1 to draw a blank.

Pipe may warm up for Prestbury Park by saddling the winner of today's big race, Sandown's Sunderlands Imperial Cup, in which he is represented by the favourite, Blowing Wind.

The bookmaking sponsors offer a £50,000 bonus for any er Champion Chase. Kadastrof horse that goes on to collect a race at the Festival after sucess company for an Arkie Trophy at Esher. Sunderlands offset their liability by offering delibcrately short odds at Cheltenham on their Sandown winner, which they then back with rival firms. They had to cough up five years ago when "I don't want to sound too Pipe himself achieved the double with Olympian.

> RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Idiot's Lady (Chepstow 1.45) B: Hoh Express (Sandown 4.05)

The Imperial Cup has been made notable this week by the tumbling price of two horses. drastically by Coral, William Hill and Victor Chandler despite Kadastrof will be one of the those firms not taking a penny piece from the general public. The bookmakers' argument was who has shown his battling that they had not initially asqualities to good effect across sessed the race correctly, which,

The other great movement came when Rubhahunish, who was the 66-1 rank outsider early in the week; suddenly dropped like a stone until be

The gambled on horses are united by the fact that their recent form is ostensibly deplorable. Blowing Wind did manage to split Collier Bay and Reikeel at Haydock last time, but those horses ran as if ty - and they'd shared it about an hour before the race.

It is possible that the gambling smokescreens will mean good value about a horse from a notoriously scrious puring yard. While another fancied horse in Nordance Prince is unlikely to appreciate the going, the surface looks perfect for Lynda Ramsden's Hoh Express (next best 4.05).

There is solitary action today too from Wolverhampton and three contests on the BBC from Chepstow. The Welsh races muster just a pathetic 16 runners between them, but there appears to be two standout value bets. Mon Amie (1.15) is improving quicker than the handicapper thinks, while IDIOT'S LADY (nap 1.45) faces opponents who are mostly either out of form or out of the handicap.



Savouring the moment: Despite his great successes at Cheltenham and beyond, Charlie Swan has not become spoilt by his good fortune

Swan reserved for a Champion role

NO JOCKEY at the Cheltenham Festival next week will be carried out on to the racecourse by a greater wave of public support than Charlie Swan. Yet an odd fact is that while his most potent weighing room rivals in Richard Dunwoody, Maguire are Irishmen based in England, the cight-times champion jockey from over the wa-

Scottish and his mother English but any notion that the jockey is anything but a son of the sharprock himself is met with great bafflement. "I was born here so I've always felt Irish," he says. Indeed, Swan has never felt it necessary to move more than a few hundred metres from his Co Tipperary birthplace of Cloughjordan.

That is oot to say, however, that his ancestors have oot played a part in moulding him. When it comes to post-match chit-chat in the unsaddling enclosure there are few who can match Charlie's expertise. He can soothe the saddest of owners' hearts with a kind appreci-

This may be a skill passed great-great grandfather. Sur- ented.

geoo Swan was Bonnie Prince Charlie's physician when the Prince's army was scattered by Butcher Cumberland at Culloden Moor. As the surgeon was on the point of execution, he suggested the cold steel would. be better employed repairing Tony McCoy and Adrian English generals injured in the conflict. He volunteered and

His descendant has survived

ter has nothing but British long enough on another field of blood swirling through his veins. strife to become the most suc-Charlie Swan's father is cessful jumps jockey Ireland has winners in his bomeland than anyone else, and also holds the record for both most winners in a season and the most in a calendar year. He has twice been leading jockey at the Cheltenham Festival, where he has partnered 11 winners. Aidan-O'Brien, his main employer, calls him "the best jumps jockey in the world".

Yet Swan himself is most unenthusiastic about his own skills. "If anything at all stands out in my riding it's the ability to judge pace," he says. "I suppose you have to have a small bit of talent to do what I've done, but ation of a horse's performance. it's more important to be in the right place at the right time. It's down by his great-great-great- better to be born lucky than tal- reveal how vulnerable those

Cheltenham glory beckons for Ireland's top rider. Richard Edmondson reports

There are several other some of them in the jockeys' room. If circumstances had would have ridden into the record books in my place."

It may have been hard, however known. Charles Francis on the yellow brick road during and ride with balls of steel. By Thomas Swan has ridden more his early days as an apprentice, when he used to lift muck sacks so heavy he had to have them bearings in a pocket. O'Grady's there are signs that he no longer loaded on to his shoulders by someone else. When he arrived at Kevin Prendergast's vard, there was one particular fellow apprentice who did oot exactly afford him a pot of tea and scones welcoming party. Swan and Kieren Fallon have, though, left their juvenile hos-

tility a long way behind. Charlie too soon made distant history of those chimneysweep days and by 1987 he had his first ride at the Festival on Irish Dream, trained by his father, Donald. The tyro broke his left arm in that venture, and the long surgical scars on his arms limbs have been ever since.

Three years later, Swan had jockeys who are just as good as his first Cheltenham win with I am, but they haven't had the Trapper John in the Stayers' breaks that I have. I look at Hurdle and another three years

after that he won the Ritz Club Trophy as the meeting's leading been different, one of them rider. A second Ritz in 1994 included the celebrated Coral Cup victory of Time For A that our jockey understood he was not to take out some ball memento of a board covered in has the appetite to chase down green baize and embedded with two steel balls is among the trophies in Swan's lounge.

> By that time, CF Swan had become the Blondin of the turf and was balancing his commitmeots so delicately that he rode the ammunition this year that just about every decent horse in Ireland. In a perverse way this helped the careers of young men like McCoy and Paul Carberry, who were forced to desert Ireland in search of more boun-

tiful opportunities elsewhere. Yet throughout his persistent hegemooy there has always been the grandstand gossip that Chartie Swan was nowhere near , as effective over fences as be

was over hurdles. Charlie, as you might imagine, disputes this. "I used to do a lot of showjumping and cross-country before I was on the Flat and maybe I forgot that and it took me a while to get back into the swing of things over jumps," he says, "but

that was a long time ago. "People can say what they like, and even though I've only ridd 1 four winners over fences in England, they have been Run, whose trainer, Edward two Whitbread Gold Cups, a Even modern dectistry techever, to convince Swan he was O'Grady, told Swan to go out Greenalls Gold Cup and a niques have managed to main-on the yellow brick road during and ride with balls of steel. By Champion Chase."

This will be the first Festival

of Swan's third decade and every single ride, even at the greatest meeting of them all. He most wants to win the big races, especially Istabrag's Champion Hurdle on Tuesday. "I've got some nice rides but I don't have I've had in the past," he says. "I used to ride in nearly every race over there but this year I don't have as many rides.

"I didn't particularly want to take a ride in the Arkle because that's the race before Istabraq and you doo't ofteo get the Champion Hurdle, so you like lead-up as possible."

When you telephone Charhe Swan, especially around Festival time, you get used to the engaged signal. When connection is made, however, he treats your call though with a fresh significance that suggests it's Alexander Graham Bell on the other end. Despite the sort of success which has stained others, little has changed about Charlie, the quiet little boy who used to have a stammer. tain a set of choppers that were designed with apple-bobbing more in mind than National Hunt racing.

Charlie will be a reassuring figure at Prestbury Park this week, a man who appreciates what the fates have giveo him and continues to do so. "There's that bit more pressure beforehand at this meeting but once you're out there on the horse it's just down to whether you're good eoough," he says.

"It's a nice rivalry at the Festival on the track and in the stands. When you look at all the trouble oorth of the border, it's good to see everyone so relaxed at Cheltenham, where the Irish chance to ride a favourite in the and English thing is so good-natured. Cheitenham will always to take as much risk out of the be the meeting for me. I just



GREG WOOD THE A-Z OF BETTING

Z is for ...

Zero: The amount, more or less, which off-course bookmakers contribute to racing via the Levy. This is hardly oews, since perceptive punters have. been pointing out for years that there is a significant difference between the level of off-course betting duty demanded by the Chancellor (currently 6.75 per cent) and the amount that the bookies charge on your bets (nine per ceot, charged on either your stake before the race or your returns - if your horse wins - afterwards). It is true that an accounting anomaly forces them to pay tax on tax when punters pay up beforehand, but then, they also charge nine per cent on everything, even though it is only bets on British horse racing

Levy Board, which is then nassed back to the sport via prize-money, interest-free loans for racecourse developis that punters, oot bookies, pay the Levy, and this would not be quite so irritating - any business, after all, will require its customers to pay its overheads - were it not for the fact that even oow there are still some stubborn bookmakers' representatives who insist that the £50m or so the Board receives each year comes out of their pockets. Add to this the fact that the bookies are represented oo the Board and thus is spent - a classic case of tax-

which require a payment to the and it is a wonder that the lumpen proletariat that is the British punting class has oot long since riseo up to secure some basic human rights. Perment and so on. The basic truth haps they are still trying to decide who should be first against

"holiday" for not trying hard enough, when he finished fifth in a handicap at York's Dante meeting last year. Luca Cumani, his trainer, was fined, and Royston Ffrench, his jockey, hanned after that run, but as it turned out, the 30-day ban from the racecourse imposed have a say in how the money on a possibly grateful horse was not exactly a punishment

of jurisprudence. Precisely 32 days later, Zaralaska bolted up in the Bessborough Stakes at forced the Jockey Club to look again at its well-inteodoned attempt to punish horses which do oot give their all. As a result, the latest versioo Zarajaska: One of the more of the oon-trying rules innotorious horses to be given a chudes a cunning little clause which forbids a horse banned for not trying (the penalty, incidentally, is now 40 days) from running in a major race

Zigzag: The sort of path that thousands of punters will be ation without representation - from the Judge Jeffreys school taking out of Cheltenham race-

until it has taken in a lesser

event to allow the handicapper

(not to mentioo punters) to

have a close look at it.

course oo Thursday evening. And why? Because a few thousand years ago, mankind dis-Royal Ascot, which rather covered zymolysis, otherwise known as the process of fermentation. Look it up if you doo't believe me.

> Zoophobia: An irrational dread of animals, which as it happens is another likely trait among the crowds leaving the home of jump racing oext week. Stephen Little, the highrolling rails bookie, is fond of remarking that he never lays a bet oo "anything that talks". The nation's punters are about to embark on a wild ride through three days at the Festival which will probably remind them yet again that Stephen is a very smart man.

The answer is just **Blowing Wind**

The former National Hunt jockey Steve Smith Eccles (right) gives a runner-by runner analysis of today's Imperial Cup at Sandown



horse who has been backed in to favouritism. A good third to Dato Star at Haydock and although that race is hard to assess, money talks and Martin Pipe knows what it takes to win a race like this. Nahrawali: A good fourth in the Tote Gold Trophy and should run another big race. Alabang: A decent second in the Lanzarote Hurdle, this consistent type has sound each-way claims. Graham Bradley rates his chance.

Serenus: Won his first two races this season but has been op against it since. Not disgraced wheo fourth to Shahrur at Kempton. Debutante Days: A useful mare on her day, she has been

hinting at a return to form. Kingsfold Pet: Won on heavy ground last time and would need it soft to play a part. Nordance Prince: Only a novice but in great form with wins at Sandown and Doncaster. Sure to run well with his yard in cracking form.

Blowing Wind: Ex-French Star Selection: In form but looks out of his depth. Danegold: Acts on good to firm and it may be too soft. House Of Dreams: Consistent but outclassed, even with Adrian Maguire's assistance Regency Rake: Arthur Moore has plundered some big British prizes but this one is not likely to add to the tally. Rubhahunish: Simply not good enough.

Silent Cracker: Pulled up last time and would be better suited by a longer trip. Hoh Express: Useful ex-Flat racer who woo a novice at Musselburgh but steps up in class. One to keep an eye on. Sadier's Realm: In excellent form, having won four of his last five outings.

Conclusion: The support for **BLOWING WIND suggests** he will take all the beating, but his form is difficult to assess. He should see off the challenge of Nordance Prince and Alabang, who looks the each-way bet of the race.

Ayr HYPERION 1.30 Warrlin 2.00 Radical Choice 2.35 Aren't We Lucky 3.05 Feels Like Gold 3.40 Monica's Choice 4.15 Singing Sand 4.50 A Piece Of Cake

GONG: Soft (Heavy paicres).

GONG: Soft (Heavy paicres).

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BLINGISTED FREE TRANSCRIPTION.

1.30 CHEF PING BATCHELOR'S NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 4YO 2m AMMANA (FISS) L LINGO 10 2

SOOD DAY (12) A Writers 10 2

JOS RACE (6) A Balley 10 2

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- 8 declared -BETTING: evens Wherlie, 5-2 Joh Rage, 6-1 Sevens, 12-1 Good Day, Thu O'Shunke, 16-1 Setten Slates 2.00 JOHN BROWN MEMDRIAL NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m 1f.

5 04040 FERLOE BRANKE SH (S2) R Johnson 7 17 3 K Johnson 6 USP 44 LAKELAND EXTRON (17) Na A Nauchion 7 10 2 Supple - 9 declared BETTING: 10-11 Paparteing, 5-2 Particul Choice, 19-2 Cottniowe Boy, 61 Copperhant, 25-1 Funion Rambler, Laboland Edition.

2.35 EAGLE TAVERNS NOVICE HANDICAP

1 4-021 MERN MASCIERADE 20, C) Mr. M. Roudey T. H. D. P. Noven

2 05-02 ARENT WE LUCKY (22) J. J. Ordell 8 D. N. P. Carberry

3 05-05 RESSAN ARRECT 600 M. W. Emistry 4 104 — P. Morde 25

4 42225 J. J. WEGOLY (28) Mr. D. Transco 5 D. D. L. B. Harding

5 POPUS CHEF CHIPME (198) W. Mr. D. 5 D. D. B. Harding

6 POPUS CHEF CHIPME (198) W. Mr. D. 5 D. D. B. Harding

7 DIPPO ALL PORTUS (21) Mr. D. Transcon 6 D. D. B. McGrath (3)

7 DIPPO ALL PORTUS (21) Mr. D. Transcon 6 D. D. B. McGrath (3)

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3.05 HAMILTON CAMPBELL HANGICAP CHASE (CLASS D) 25,000 added 3m 1f

GESCOS PROFLUENT (USA) (12) IN Hammond 7 (20 _____ R Gentley 1/22- STONEY BURKE (266) (7) Max L Russel 6 10 13 _____ 3005 PELLS LINE GOLD (19) (40) G TREES AND BOOK AND STORE GOLD (19) (40) G TREES AND STORE GOLD (19) (40) F GOLD (19) (40) F GOLD (19) (50) F GOLD (19) F GO

Minister weight 10st. The handloop veights: Merchwood 9st 7fb. BETTING: 9-4 Cable (Sent, 5-2 Profuset, 7-2 Hanghly Folium, 4-1 Feels Like Gold, 15-1 Standy Borks, 20-1 Merchwood, 33-1 Easter Dats. 3.40 AYRSHIRE YEOMANRY CUP HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) \$4,000 2m 4f

icep weights: Parish that 726, How Young Man

4.50 FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m 1 ROCHERING (N) (D) F Mangh 6 11 71
11 SLITMORE (118) (CD) F Mangh 5 71 8
A RECE OF CAKE Ms M Reveloy 5 71 4
PREELATORE J Charlon 5 71 4
TIME SIRGLAR (NG) R Golding 6 71 4
TIME AFTER TIME LUNGS 5 71 4
D CALL THE TIME (SS) R Mathonaid 6 10 70
0 CANDER KOPAE (CD) M Barras 5 10 15 - 8 declared -SETTING: overs Sillyuses, 52 Rocheburg, 4-1 A Piece of Cole, 12-1 Time After Thype, 16-1 Freelands, 33-1 others

BETTENG: 5-4 Monten's Cholos, 7-2 Capitar, 9-2 Fee Therier, 6-1 Common Sound, 12-1 Now Young Man, 14-1 Parish

4.15 (CLASS D) 26,000 added 2m

HUGH BARCLAY HANDICAP CHASE

How the start of the game turns perfection into poverty



ROWBOTTOM

ON THE GULF BETWEEN TRAINING AND COMPETITION

they are on the pitch, still wearing their tracksuits, hursting into impressive, zig-zagging sprints and flicking the hall about with a disdain reminiscent of Alfredo di Stefano.

The goalkeeper is a marvet of competence as he deals dismissively with every practice shot, clutching this effort, watching with a hint of scorn as another passes inches wide

The tumbering central defender picks a ball up on his foot as if it is attached to his boot, lifts it into the air and playfully allows it to settle on his bear-like shoulders.

What a team. Pity the opponents. Although, on inspec-

YOU notice it most abviously tion, they are doing much the nomenal Ukrainian pole area beside the stage at the casions when parents and in-with footballers, I think. There same thing. What a match in vaulter, has long been ru-world championships in Frim-terested parties were invited, prospect, then...

Ten minutes later, the jugglers have turned to oals and the pitch is given over to dull industry. The referee blew his whistle. And something hap-

There are so many wistful tales told of phenomenal sporting performances produced outside competition. Athletics, with its literal measures of achievement, produces large numbers of them.

Before Roger Bannister became the first man to break four minutes for the mile, there were stories that his great Australian rival, John Landy, had already done so in training.

Sergei Buhka, the phe-

vaulter, has long been rumoured to have achieved beights well above his official world records while practising.

High jumpers report prodigious clearances in training: iavelin throwers reflect upon monster throws, throws which weren't measured but which must have been, oh, well over 90 metres. Easily.

Relaxation, a crucial part of athletic endeavour, comes easily when it doesn't matter. But e same is true in the realm of the unathletic competitor. I once interviewed Eric

Bristow about the affliction which had undermined his position as the world's leading dart thrower - dartitis.

We spoke in the warm-up

ley Green. I had just watched Bristow tip handful after dainty handful of darts into the tre- in what must surely have been hle 20 on the board behind his table. The Crafty Cockney ap-

peared to be at his peak. But he knew otherwise. And, when he got out on to the board, he faltered. Anybody who has ever competed at anything could sympathise.

At such times, I often think with a rush of shame of my own lamentable failings in competitive conditions. One excruciating example comes to mind more often than others -- the final nf a table tennis competition which I reached while on holiday as a young teenager.

It was one of those grim oc-

world championships in Frim- terested parties were invited, and my own family dutifully turned up to watch me partake one of the most dismal sporting spectacles ever witnessed.

I knew - from informal

practice - I had the measure of my smaller, younger opponent. But as the match progressed, I became assailed with a kind of palsy. When, to everyone's relief, the match ended, I had won. But in truth, my opponent had simply lost even more disastronsly than I had.

Responding positively to the those two little words game on - is the key to any sporting achievement. It is not surprising that sports psychology is a huge growth area.

Increasingly, the world's sporting arenas are filling with jargon as competitors strive to win the hattle of the mind.

According to this new orthodoxy, you must strive every day for focus, you must cast all negativity from your soul; and which shall hereonin be known as "The Zone".

At last month's winter Olympics, I asked a member of the Canadian women's ice hockey team bow she and ber colleagues were reacting to the fact that they had come into the competition as favourites.

Her previously open face clouded over as she executed Mental Gameplan One. "Pressure doesn't exist in nur vocabulary," she said.

A startling tactic. Deny the existence of a thing, and it disappears. Excellent. But why stop there? Why not deny the existence of defeat?

As things turned out, the Canadians lost the final to their keenest rivals, the Unityou must seek a state of grace ed States. They may have managed to keep pressure out of their vocabulary, but they couldn't exclude it from their minds.

Three cheers for that. Because watching competitors cope with the anxiety, doubt and the cold fear which pressure trails in its wake is one of the most compelling elements of any sporting spectacle. Those pre-match jugglers need to turn into oafs for the real jugglers' worth to become apparent.

Doldrums

for Smith

By Stuart Alexander

FTVE down, four to go, and the

name of the Whitbread game

is to catch Paul Cavard as the

fleet leave sultry São Sebastião

today for the tricky, 4,750-

mile sixth leg from Brazil to

Cayard, the American skip-

per of the Swedish boat EF Lan-

guage, has combined some fast

learning, clever navigation, and

a strengthening crew to win

three legs so far and build a lead

of nearly 100 points over Grant

Dalton in the Monaco-flagged

on Cayard's brow is the worry

that he has been unable to fit a

new mast, because the spare was

air-freighted to the tip of South

The only reason for a frown

Merit Cup.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Sailing

hold the key

Betts puts his shoulder to the wheel for Wigan

himself talking about shouldering new responsibilities at Wigan, he winces at the recent memory of what his shoulder has put him through.

Nn doubt it will all seem worthwhile at his second coming far Wigan in the Challenge Cup tie against St Helens tomorrow, but he bas suffered to make it possible.

It all started last October in Brisbane when Betts, playing for the Auckland Warriors but al-England this season, lined up a tackle on Broncos' Peter Ryan.

He got it wrong. "He came in at me and then went away. I was reaching for him and his knee and real, tear-jerking pain. caught me right in the shoulder," Betts says. "It came out of the again, which was the good part. The bad part was that the muscles around it were gone.

"I tried to get off the field, the whispers that Wigan had not take me off and, being the prat I was, I went back into the de-

THE close links between

Sheffield and Castleford will be

underlined today when cousins

Matt Crowther and Jason Flow-

outside of the Cas defence, it

will be their full-back Flowers

who will have the responsibili-

ers hurtle into each other.

WHEN Denis Bens catches Dave Hadfield on the second coming of rugby league's renowned second row

> ing about typical English commitment. tackling. It was destined to hurt a lot more.

Major surgery involved stitching chest muscles hack together and tightening the ligaments and tendons to hold everything in place.

"What I've bad to do since again," Betts says, "It doesn't want to stretch, so it's not a nice thing to have to do. It's been two sessions a day with the physio

with getting up every morning socket and went straight back in and knowing it would just be pain and more pain - and that there were months to go." On top of that, there were

hut they didn't seem to want to only signed an over-priced player, but a crippled one as well. The cost of bringing Betts fensive line and found myself back home is the stuff of rugby

"Matt has the ability to become

side's winning try against Brad-

ford in the last round, will have

quished Leeds and Bradford,

and full of purpose and opti-

resent a tricky hurdle. Although

Judiciously strengthened

Flowers, the scorer of his

a top-class winger this season."

ing commentators who were unaware of what he had done talk- start looking for ways out of the

The arrival of Dave Whelan and his unfathnmahly deep pockets has averted that crisis. hut Betts says that he never felt under any added pressure because of the price on his head. I get paid what people will pay

me," he says. "I'm getting what ready scheduled for a return to then is stretch everything the market said I was worth." But what are Wigan getting? "I'm a better player now than when I left Wigan," the 28-yearold Betts says. "I'm more mature,

I've experienced the biggest "I got really, really depressed competition in the game and I'm a little hit more worldly wise." Betts' globetrotting has not brought him undiluted approval. There were those in

Auckland who believed he fell short of justifying his status as the Warriors' biggest signing. "The people who count

Crowther ready for clash of cousins

right over the top of him," says their reputation is as a tena-

the Eagles' coach, John Kear, cious, workmanlike side, the ad-

mism, Sheffield do indeed rep- the last round. That was an un-

knew the effort I was putting into a struggling side," he says. trying to stop a try by pulling the league legend. Accurate fig- "I was having to play a differures are elusive, but suffice it to ent type of game. We had two It burt enough watching the say that when the new regime young props and I was taking now I'll be able to shoulder tape of that moment and hear- took over at Central Park they the ball more up the middle.

dition of Dave Watson at

stand-off and the presence of

Crowther on one wing and

Nick Pinkney on the other hint

at a more expansive approach.

draw they wanted, in the shape

of First Division Hull Kingston

Rovers, but they will be hoping

for more cohesion in their play

and better support at The Stoop

than they got against Halifax in

convincing victory, showing that

The London Broncos got the

"I've brought back three TVs, a couple of videos and a cupboard full of other man of the match awards, so I must

have had some big games." All the same, it was when Betts reverted to a wider-ranging role, for Great Britain in the Test series in New Zealand in 1996 and for the Warriors in the World Club Championship, that Kiwi audiences saw what they had been expecting.

Expectations are also high at Wigan and Betts is aware of the old adage that you should never try to recreate old glories. After all, the main reason he left, Wigan was that be had become bored with the predictability with which they beat inferior opposition week after week.

"I'm coming back to a very different club from the one I left. I can't see a situation where we'll dominate the way we did. There should be five or six clubs in the running for honours and that's what will lift standards here."

Starting tomorrow, Betts will re-forge his alliance with Andy Farrell, who virtually carried the side through last season. "He's had to do a lot," Betts says, "but ouch! - some of the burden."

With that - and the threat of

Rovers' explosive Stanley Gene

- in mind the Broncos will play

Peter Gill at stand-off, with

Terry Matterson at loose for-

ward and Rohbie Beazley re-

- and a poster campaign should

hring in a better crowd than the

disappointing 3,000 who

watched the Halifax game -- but

need to be wary of the goal-

They should be good enough

turning at hooker.



Denis Betts: Fit again after enduring 'pain and more pain'

Photograph: Allsport

SUPERLEAGUE PLAY-OFFS Group A Nottingham Panthers v Newcastle Cobra (73); Sheffield Steelers v Ayr Southat Ea-ples (72). Group 8: Besingstoke Blaon v Brachnell Bess (820); Manchester Storm v Carofif Devils (72).

ATHLETICS: National Cross-country Char

MING: World Cup swent (She

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Quanter-fi-tale: London v Hull Kingston Rovers (20); Selford v Hull (30); Wigen v St Helens (145).

RUGBY LEAGUE First Division: Feather-stone v Widnes (40); Keighley v Leigh (30); Rochdale v Develoury (30); Swinton v Hun-slet (30); Wakefield v Witherhaven (40).

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Gloucester v Saracens (3.0); Wasps v Lon-don frieh (3.0).

EHA CUP Semi-finair: Besson v Chichester (130); Carmock v Canterbury (2.0). NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier District. East Grinstead v Old Loughtonians (2.0); Houn-slow v Reading (2.0). First Division: Hazert v Warrington (2.0); St Albens v Hampsland & Westnerster (2.0).

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Chester Jets Worthing Bears (5.30); Birmingham Bulle v Derby Storm (6.30); London Yoven Greater London Leopards (6.30).

SUPERLEAGUE PLAY-OFFS: Group A: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Nortingham Purchers (830), Sheffield Staclers v Newcastic Co-bras (830), Group B: Bracharil Bees v Mer-chester Storm (60), Cardill Daylis v Basingstoke Black (60).

FINALING: World Cup event (Shr

FRIENDLY: Barrow v Warrington (3U).

BADMINTON: All England Chempic

Other sports

TOMORROW Rugby League

Rugby Union

Hockey

Baskethall

Other sports

contingent of Castleford-born are treating the unfashionable players, is a recent convert to the Eagles as potentially more danleft wing. If he gets around the gerous opponents than the van-

Crowther, one of Sheffield's other ideas about that, but Cas

ty for stopping him. "If he gets through, he'll go Weekend fixture guide

By Dave Hadfield

Foothall 3 0 unless stated GM VALXHALL CONFERENCE Hereford v Gateshe

FA UMBRO TROPHY FOURTH ROUND Cheltenham v Hayes FA CARLSBERG VASE SEMI-FINALS FIRST LEG Runton v Tow Line.. Therton v Kidagrove

RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: Ayles-bury Utd v Heybridge Swrits; Boreham Wood v Dagenham & Redbridge; Bromley v



Besingstoker, Carahalton v Hitchin; Dulwich v Yeading; Herrow Borough v Blatop's Storthord; Hendon v Staton Unit, Kingstonian v Walton & Hereham; Purfleet v St Albans, First Divisions Barton Rovers v Bliefricay; Cherisay v Bognor Rogie; Croydon v Aldershot; Gaya v Worthing; Hampion v Abingdon Rown; Leetherhead v Layton Pernent; Maidenhead Utd v Stainos; Molesey v Witkingham; Romford v Berithamated, Thame v Wembley; Uddridge v Winyteleda, Second Divisions: Bardong v Windor & Bon, Bardong v Windor & Bon, Bradon Blysisons: Bardong v Windor & Bon, Bradon Blysisons: Bardong v Windor & Romer v Northwood, Horsham v Eghem; Hungerford v Wittism, Leighton v Methow; Tooting & Matcham v Tetury; Weeldston v Method; Bradon V Wittism, Leighton v Cheshunt, Third Divisions Avelay v Dorling; Carahien Clause v Lest Thurode Croydon Aft v Heriford; Epsom & Ewell v Kingsbury; Heriow v Southalf; Homehartov Ford; Lesses v Were; Ting v Hernel Hempstesk; Wingsta & Finchley v Clapton.

ley V Capton.
UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Accordigion Stanley v Leigh RMS. Bamber Bridge v Runcorn; Chorley v Findley; Geiseborguph v Colwyn Bay; Cylieley v Fyde; Marinte v Ernley; Spernymoor v Alfreton; Whatford Bryth, Find Division: Congleton v Esstwood Town; Droyladen v Great Harwood; Finalley v Worlangbon; Richton v Bradtord PA; Greine v Method; Harrogate Town v Belper; Netherfield v Lincoln Uni; Stocishridge PS v Ashian; Whithy V Trafford; White Bey v Worldop.

ley Bey v Workson.

OR MARKTENS L'AGGIE Premier Division:
Bath v Forest Green; Bromegrove v King's
Lynn; Cembridge City v Aeritord; Dorchester
v Atherstone; Gloucester v Nursettor; Hestings v Burton Abton; Mentlyr v St Leonardh
Stamucott, Stringbourne v Morcester; Temworth v Salebury. Midband Division: Bedworth v Brackley; Blatton v Reunds; Hindley
Util v Corb; Bleaton v Stourholds; Paget
v Shepshed Dynamo; Recing Cub Warwock
v Moor Green; VS Rugby v Evenham; Wisbech v Bleistreff. Southern Division: Beldock v Flast; Chelmsfard v Chelenfort,
Grennester v Basifley; Dardond v Waterlowells; Fisher v Trowbridge; Newport
(Gwent) v Margate; Newport (toW) v Erth
& Behredore.

o convector.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE.
Premier Division: Boston Ibwn v Kempston;
Ford Sports v Minices Blackstone; Long
Buddy v Eynasbury. Northempton Spercer
v Potion; St Nects v Bosne; Statnford v Desborough; Sill. Corby v Wootlon; Stoffold v
Spoting; Wellingborough v Helbesch; Yauley v Buckingham Yown.

wy v buoungalim flows.

WINSTONSEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Beckenhern v Feverahern; Cray v
Chathern; Crodomhil v Constitut; Deel v
Shappev; Enth v Lordswood; Hythe v VCD
Alhield; Fantagate v Herne Bay; Swanley Funess v Stade Green; Turbridge Welle v Canterbury. UNLIET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First.
Division: Burgess Hill v Eastbourne Town;
Chicheser v Whitehawk; Languay Sports v
Heseocks, Latehampton v Selsey; Mile

kicking of Mike Fletcher.

Oak v Horsham YMCA; Pagham v Peace-haven & Telecombe; Redhill v Arundel; Selt-deen v Portfield; Shorehum v Ringmer; Wick v Hallshem.

ROPETHERIN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Presenter Division: Annihorpe Weitere Villeby MW: Brigg v Curzon Ashton; Denaby v Haltem; Huckford v Pictoring; Livermedge v Eccloshill; North Perriby v Ossett Town; Os-sett Albion v Arnotit; Pomietrat Collieries v Gasenbughton Weitere; Setby v Hestfald Main; Sharifield v Theology.

Marri, Sriemado V Maccoay.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First.

Nivision: Biacipool Rovers v Burscoupt.
Citirence v Chedderton; Darwen v Vasatel
Gilt; Hestingden v Warringtor; Maine Road
v St Helters; Nertwich v Glossop North End;
Newcastis Rown v Hollan Old Boys; Prescot
Cables v Mossier, Remstodtom v Atherton
LR; Salkord v Rossendale.

Lit, carend v Rossendale.

JEWSON WESSEL LEAGUE: Newbury v Cowes Sports, Totton v Gosport Borouch; Andover v Portamouth RN; Bounemouth Rv v Arrestructures; Brockenhunt v Thatchern; Christichurch v BAT Sports; Downton v East Cowes Vics.

Cover Vics.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Clactor v Wromann; Dias v Gorlestor; Sy City v Stowmartet; Fals v Gorlestor; Sy City v Stowmartet; Falsotowe v Haliciant; Great Varmouth v Neumartet; Falsotowe v Haliciant; Great Varmouth v Neumartet; Havelot v Warderers; Woothridge v Felembern; Lowestott v Wartoye; Watton v Sudoury Warderers; Woothridge v Felembern; Interestant Express MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Barvell v Helesowon Hantlers; Bridgoorth v Bottmere St Michaelir; Kingt Norton Town v Oktory; Kingtoniet Victoria v Chasetower, Persince v Vices Midlands Police; Rosester v Palest Ville; Sandwell Borough v Rushell Ohympic; Shifmat v Bloswich; Wednesdeld v Stepenhil; Wilenhell v Stratford. ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN
LEAGUE First Division: Crock v Guisborcugh; Durham v Billingham Town; Morphal
Billingham Synthonis, Multion v RTM Newceatie; Northallerton v Jerrow; Seeham
Red Starv Bedington Tenient; Shictor v Consect; South Shielde v Durston Federation
Brewery; Stockton v Penrith.

RESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE Ruckle Thistin v Wick Academy, Cove Ruggers v Lessiamouth; Fort William v De-reconnels; Huntly v Clachmouddin; Poter-

well SH CUP Quarter-finals; Bangor City v Caerterfon (20); Barry Town v TNS Liansentificaid (20); Caertrus v Newtown (20); Cornship Cusy Normatis v Cernibran (20) (at 1954).

BASS IRISH CUP Quarter-floats: Armegin City v Giorboran (at the Ovel, Belliast); Cru-suders v Institute; Distillery v Gienswon; Lin-field v Portadown.

Cricket FIFTH TEST MATCH (Third day, includes

Rugby League SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP On nai: Castleford v Sheffiold (230).

Rugby Union

v Blackheeth (20).

###SON NATIONAL LEAGUE One: Leeds to Liverpool St Helens (30): London Welch v Harrogate (245); Lydney v Worcester (30): Newbury v Party (20): Oley v Reading (30): Newbury v Party (30): Two North: Hindday v Licheld (30): Kendel v Appting (30): Henchester v Brotingtern (30): Budgley Park v Shelfield (30): Sadgley Park v Shelfield (30): State on Campany v Welsell (30): Sadgley Park v Shelfield (30): State on Campany v Shelfield (30): Kouth Valentern v Pymouth (30): Redruth v Metrogolitan Police (30): Weston-supe-Mare v Henley (30): Welligh NATYONAL LEAGUE Premier Di-(SD); Weston-super-Marre v Henley (SD).
WELSH MATTONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Bridgend v Newport (ED); Swarssee v Ebbs Wale (230; Fisat Division: Blackwood v Newtonige (230); Easynteen v UWC (Cerciff Institute) (230; Carephilly v Aberliery (250); Cross (Ney v Aberliery Caro); Cross (New v Aberliery Ca

WELSH CHALLENGE TROPHY Semi-fi-mate: Cardiff v Lianell (230): Portypried v Nenth (230).

Neen (230).

TENNIENTS SCOTTISM PRIMIERSHIP
Division 1A: Currie v Hawlok (20); West of
Scotisme v Meinose (20). Division 13: Borcuchmur v String County (30); Jed-Forest
v Heinots FP (30). Division 2k: Dundse HSFP
v Kimemock (20); Gala: v Gesgow Heaviss
(30). Division 28: Bogger v Kinchalty (30);
Petbles v Mosselburgh (30), Division 3A:
Grangemouth v Gordonieus (30); Stewarts
Metville FP v Selkin (30), Division 3B: Hilhead/Jordanial v Glasgow Southern (30);
Stewartry v Ayr (30);

Alls IRISH LEAGUE First Illyfision:

Hockey

MEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Barked Tigers v Canterbury (20); Beeston v Guildford (130); Gernock v Southgate (315); Donoscare v Teddington (130). First Division: Brooklands v Lewes (20); Cheimstord v Bournille (215); Firstrands v Sheffield (10); Hampstead & Westminster v Surtison (20); Hull v Diusharts (20); Indian Gyradians v Parmilley (130); loce v Oddord University (120); Loughborough Students v Octord Hawles (230); St Albans v Gloucaster City (10); Stoupport v Harisaston Maggles (230).

NORTH Division Ons: Ben Flhydding v Timpersy, Durham University Formby, Nesson v Sheffield Banteers, Norten v Chester; Southport v Harrogue; Swallwel v Wigen.

D72 MIDLAND Preshier: Harrigot-h-Archer v Bloostoft; Hattome v North Stefford: North Notis v Kinsles; Northernyton Saints v Coverty & North Westwick, Northingten v Bloesonfaid; Olion & West Warwick France.

Loughborugh Students, Brackes v Leices-ter, Sunderland Bedens v Brackes V Leices-ter, Sunderland Bedens v Brackind Swith-enbank, Second Division: Cital Loughtenians v Pourtars, West Wilney v Walking Swiths; Esi-ling v Blusherts; Aktickgo v Sharwood. (Ar. Women's National Leegue games start at 1.30).

WOMEN'S WEST Pramier: Bournemouth v Cohvelt, Chelenhert v Redland; Leoninster v Exeter; St Austel v Exmouth; Yese v Taurton Vale. Teurion Vale.

ROYAL AL FAISAL WOMEN'S MEDLAND

POWAL AL FAISAL WOMEN'S MEDLAND

Premier Cirison Rambias v Lutur: Hampton in Anden v Betper; North Staffs v Leicester; Pickwick v Kathering.

WOMEN'S SOUTH Division One: Hampstead & Westminster v Handon; Horsham v
Winchmore HS, Reading v Dulwich, Tulee HS

v Southempton; Winchester v Maidenhead.

V Soumenpoon; Whiteleter V Maidenheed, TRYSPOHTS WOMEN'S THIREE COUN-TRES Division Once Brackmill v Oxford Uni-versity; Oky of Oxford v Renelegit; Farmham Common v Reading, Henley v Oxford-Hamiss; Maidenheed v Soming; Newbury v Millon Keynes; Wickor v West Witney; Wycombe Rye v Millon Keynes (I.)

Basketbali

America for the team's other boat, the all-woman-crewed EF Education, after they had been dismasted on the approach to Cape Horn.

The women had just three days of respite after motorsailing the last 1,000 miles and shared with Britain's Lawrie Smith only a short preparation period. Smith was also dismasted on the last leg and was able to restart sailing again only on Wednesday after a new

mast bad been fitted. Smith is under pressure to out in some big results, if only to restore the ptide and esteem of a team who started as one of the favourites but are seventh overall. He points to the Doldrums as the major hurdle of the leg. "You have to be in the lead after the Doldrums to win," he said.

Dalton, confident that his broken collar-bone is mending sufficiently well to allow him to perform light duties, agrees, but his dilemma is whether to sail more miles to find better wind well offshore, or hug the sborter route up the coast of Brazil.

brand old one

He wants to attack Cayard, but knows he will have to fight to defend his second place against Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match and Chessie Racing, which has John Kostecki back as skipper.

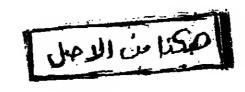
Two of the nine boats - Innovation Kvaerner and Toshiba - have decided to sail with 11, instead of the maximum 12 crew. Stead of the maximilim 12 crew, Whiterean Round The World RACE-Standings after five lage: 1 EF Language (See) P Cayard 507pts; 2 Merit Cup (Morseo) G Debon 41; 3 Swedish Mazin (See) G Krantz 404; 4 Chessie Recing (US) J Kostecia 389; 5 Innovation Kneemer (Nor) K Frustad 372; 8 Toshiba (US) P Standbridge 236; 7 Sik Cut (GS) L Smith 284; 8 Burnel Streety (Welf) R Heiner 205; 9 EF Education (Swe) C Guillou 139.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

 The England women cricketers were continually referred to as lesbians and dykes... They said one woman needed to have her legs prised open with a cricket bat. Teresa Harrild, former Lord's receptionist, who won her sex discrimination case this week

 You cannot take him seriously any longer. I don't know where he's going next but if it's Malta then he'll say Malta should stage the World Cup. Wolfgang Niersbach, German tootball federation spokesman, on João Havelanges apparent support for England's 2006 World Cup bid.

● 1 think 1 am who I am, hopefully, and that's the way it is Colin Montgomenie, golfer



Doldrums

hold the key

100

for Smith

Whose game is it anyway?

Another week, another round of bloodletting in English rugby union's open civil war. If it wasn't so pathetic it would be funny, writes

Chris Hewett

START by taking all the available hypocrisy, chicanery, secrecy and mis-information and mix in some power politics, a pinch of paranoia and a dash of playground petulance. Now add a monster helping of selfimportance, season with a few outright lies - great big whoppers of the barefaced variety are very much in season - and hey presto, there you have it: English rugby union, 1998style. Half Watergate, half Alan Partridge.

Thanks to the chronic mistrust betweeo the major players in the interneeine struggle between the professional clubs and their governing body, the standard of debate has been puerile in the extreme, There was an illuminating moment last Monday when Fran Cotton, one of the few central characters in this ongoing pantomime to retain a sense of humour, reacted to allegations by Chris Wright, the millionaire owner of Wasps, that he had been actively luring fresh-faced teenagers away from the contractual clutches of talent-hunting Premiership outfits, "Bloody hell," muttered the Rugby Foothall Union's vice-chairman. "They've called me a bully, they've accused me of ethnic cleansing and oow they want to do me for importuning. Where will it all end?"

Where indeed? This much is certain: there will be no semblance of a conclusion while Cliff Brittle, chairman of the RFU's management board, cootinues to massage his various obsessions in public. Twice this week, Brittle has given vent to his feelines in the most extraordinary fashion, charging the clubs with all manner of sedition and dirty-trickery before, in the very next instant, brandishing leaked copies of private letters written by his bee noir, Sir John Hall, and boasting of "moles" deep in the heart of the Premiership axis. Openness

and integrity, en: Yet if the game is no nearer a solution, the issues have at least been crystallised. Two contrasting ideals stand side by side in the public domain - Cotton's wide-ranging "Club England" document and the owner-sentation at Twickenham on Thursinvestors' "Club Charter" - and day, there are a good few acres of while the cynics have been quick to point out that rugby literature now contains more visions than the Old tral importance of the England na-Testament, there is oo better catalyst for substantive negotiations than domestic game, both agree that the

ful, if ultimately bad-tempered pre- structure in world rugby and both ac- ment is not about the what, but the planet-sized King Edward, molten to convinced of their claim to the moral



common ground between the two camps. Both sides recognise the centional team to the well-being of the the publication of rival blueprints. Premiership can and should evolve As Cotton agreed during his care- into the strongest professional club

heart of Northampton's laughably mishandled attack on this summer's tour of the southern hemisphere. Cotton wants a 35-game limit for the Test élite while the clubs envisage a maximum of 39.

But this deeply damaging argu-

knowledge the urgent need to act oo how; both documents contain practite touch - is the contractual wranplayer burn-out, the issue at the tical eminently workable proposals that are pure anathema to those on the opposite side of the great divide and without a grand-scale abanearthly chance of an accommodation.

gle over Clive Woodward's England squad. Cotton is adamant that the best players should sign with the unioo -We can never, ever allow a repeat donment of carefully considered of the Northampton problem," he operational principles, there is oo growled this week - while the clubs, profoundly emharrassed by the The hottest potato in the sack - a Franklins Gardens fiasco but no less

high ground, insist on their right to retain the all-important thumborints. subject to the safeguard of agreed international release periods.

The proof of the pudding will be in the signing, as it were. Although both Brittle and Cottoo have denied making any bank-breaking contraclaglio, the England captain, the club tening, Mr Brittle?

owners, including Dallaglio's emplayers at Wasps, have dismissed those denials as so much bullshine. Wisely, Dallaglio has maintained an aimost regal silence on the subject, but some of his senior international colleagues, notably Jeremy Guscott, have hacked the status quo. Cotton has an awful lot of persuading to do if he is to win them over.

Only slightly less important but much more urgent is the collision over Europe. The clubs say next season's Heineken Cup is a financial disaster waiting to happeo and want no part of it; Cotton considers it a gem of a competition which, were it to involve rather more English-qualified players, might even persuade him to shelve his long-standing passion for divisional rugby. As things stand, the players will reach the start of next season with two different fixture lists

on the table. Chaos, or what? There are a million and one other points of conflict. Foremost among them are the clubs' declared intention of establishing themselves as an independent body with negotiating rights over broadcasting and sponsorship deals; their proposal to shift the Five Nations' Championship to a new starting date in midspring, and Cotton's radical and spectacularly inflammatory franehise plan, which would deny some of the higgest clubs in England a place in their own Premiership.

But the central argument is a philosophical one concerning the precise nature, the very essence, of the game in this country. Io a magazine article published this week, Brittle let slip his guard by saying: "The total financial success of the RFU depeods on one thing, the success of England. People are not interested in the clubs. What people are interested in is the national team."

If he is right - if domestic rugby is driven by Woodward's team and that alone - Cotton is perfectly justified in his revolutionary replanting of the English rugby landscape.

His ideology has been drawn largely from the orthodoxy curreotly in vogue in New Zealand, where the All Black jersey carries all before it, the Super 12 provinces are tightly cootrolled by NZRFU appointees and the National Provincial Championship, the bread and butter domestic competition, grows more marginalised by the day. This year, 95 per ceol of the All Black squad will be ordered to rest rather than

Which is all fine and dandy unless, like thousands of regular rugby supporters from Bath in the South-west to Newcastle in the North-east, you happen to think that the traditional tribalism of English club rugby is something to cherisb. Some £30m worth of investment says that Hall, Wright, Nigel Wray, Keith Barwell and their fellow owners believe cluh rugby to be central to the overall package, not peripheral. If nothing else, they deserve to be tual approach to Lawrence Dal- treated like grown-ups. Are you lis-

Scottish RU sign up Metcalfe

Old friends and old enemies send their teams into battle

By Chris Hewett

IT used to be the match of the scason, a 24-carat humdinger with everything - personal pride, the destination of the league title, the price of hread and the long-term future of the human race - riding on the outcome, Newcastle and Saracens have gatecrashed the private party over the last eight months hut whenever Bath and Leicester appear simultaneously on the same rectangle of mud, the competitive fires hurn anew.

Quite simply, there is no love lost. As Austin Healey, the Leicester Lip, said in January after watching Bath relieve Brive of the Heineken Cup:

an English side can call themselves European champions at last, but why in the name of Christ does it have to be them?"

You get the feeling that both clubs would rather nominate Cliff Brittle for the Nobel Peace prize than acknowledge each other's successes. The Bath coach, Andy

Robinson, appeared to be steering well clear of the usual barbed one-upmanship as he assessed the prospects yesterday. "This' year's title is out of our hands, just as it's out of Leicester's hands," he pointed out. "We're in the pursuing pack, both of us, and all we can hope to do is win our remaining games and look coaching career.

"I'm absolutely delighted that for Newcastle and Saracens to slip up somewhere along the no favours from his rival - Robinway." It was only then that he worked the knife under the Tigers' skin by saying: "Still, at least we've got a trophy from the

season," Ouch

Almost exactly nine years ago, Robinson gathered a perfectly weighted scoring pass from a certain Dean Richards and claimed the try that made any easier by the sendingclinched a famous England victory over the French at Twickenham. Tomorrow, the former back-row confreres will renew their acquaintance on the Recreation Ground touchline as Richards undertakes the most testing challenge of his fledgling

son flatly refused to reveal his line-up, commenting that Deano would "have to get used to the little trials that are part and parcel of a coach's life" - and the Leicester legend freely admitted that the new job was turning out to be every hit as demanding as originally feared. It was not off of Martin Corry during last week's derby punch-up with Northampton and yesterday, Richards and his fellow Welford

land flanker for a fortnight. Newcastle, the title favourites. travel to Richmond this afternoon with a full hand of Scottish

Road chiefs suspended the Eng-

Predictably, he was receiving internationals. Doddie Weir, ability that is keeping us where Gary Armstrong and Alan Tait we are." he said. "Yes, we've got all return after missing the close games in hand. But having shave against Sale in midweek them and winning them are two and two points against the fastsubsiding Londoners will return Rob Andrew and company to the

top of the table. However, the lead will change hands again tomorrow if Saracens survive what is certain to be a hairy afternoon against Gloucester and while real mugger's alley this season, Andrew expects them to do just that. "Both Saracens and ourselves are proving adept at sneaking wins - we've hoth been squeezing home by four or

five points of late - and it's that

different things. It's a very, very tough Premiership this year."

Tough? Just ask Aadel Kardooni, the former Leicester scrum-half who is - or, rather, was - helping Bedford continue their runaway surge to the Allied Dunbar Premiership Two title. A burglary at Kardooni's Ringsholm is proving to be a . flat prevented him from making an important training session at Goldington Road and as a result, Bedford's eversympathetic director of rugby, Geoff Cooke, dropped him from today's home game with

until the 1999 World Cup By Chris Hewett

Player contracts may be the insurmountable stumbling block to rugby harmony in England, but the most talked-about prospect in the Scottish game knows exactly which side his bread is huttered. Glenn Metcalfe, a New Zealand-born full-back who can also play on the wing, has signed a deal with the Scottish Rugby Union taking him through to the end of next year's World Cup.

Metcalfe, who pitched up at Glasgow Hawks this season via Glasgow Academicals and

enough ice to lure big-speoding Newcastle. However, his unioo deal takes him out of reach of any English Premiership side for another 18 months.

Melrose, meanwhile, will take a decisive step towards a third successive Tennent's Premiership title if they win their first play-off match against West of Scotland at Burnhrae today. Bryan Redpath, Scott Nichol. Scott Aitken, Graham Shiel and Nick Broughton are on their casualty list, but Craig Chalmers and Roweo Shepherd return from international duty and with Waikato, made his Scotland A a 49-7 victory over West already debut against the Welsh second- in the bag, the tea-leaves point string a week ago and cut to another Borders triumph.

The 45 minutes squandered would have been better spent drilling a hole in my skull



CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV

was me last Monday night, barking those murderous obscenities while I trashed my living room and threw the telly out of the window. I apologise, and promise it won't bappen again. You can be sure of that, because I won't be watching On Side any more.

You'd think the people responsible (producer Paul Davies, editor-Philip Bernie - why shouldn't they be called to account?) might have learnt one or two lessons from the first series a few months ago. But nothing has changed: still too many guests, and still with John Inverdale, the thinking person's Terry Christian, on hand to ensure that questions of any. consequence are avoided at all costs.

When you think who the BBC could have press-ganged into lending an air of gravitas, however bogus, causing emotional distress and mis- Hansen were drinking orange juice, of those classic quantification ques-

It reminds me of a poster I sawa couple of years ago for the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park
SHAKESPEARES

COMEDY OF ERRORS THE TEMPEST PAINT YOUR WAGON

The opening set-piece established the benchmark for fatuousness. They had each of the studio gnests, Hie Nastase, Ashia Hansen and Paul Merson, standing at a swanky bar staring glumly into his or her drink. What was the intention here? Set-ups like this usually have some relevance to the people involved. The only possible connection I could think of is that one of them is a recovering alcoholic which was surely not what the makit makes you want to sue them for strange was the fact that Nasrase and Garden. Inverdale kicked off with one plodes. That's my theory, anyway.

AN open letter to my neighbours: it handling our licence money. Des Lywille Merson, the reformed boozer, tions so beloved of sports interviewed had water. Why? Was some kind of ers. "How proud are you to have takthey told to remain motionless as if paralysed by existential dread? Somebody's idea of adding a spurious resonance to an otherwise catastrophically flimsy show?

First up was Nastase, who was asked virtually oothing of any interest whatsoever. There were a couple of sentences about his aspiring political career in Romania - "if I'd known before what was going on I wouldn't have got into it" - while when asked about sport in post-cold war eastern Europe, he replied, "It's going to die."

They were joined on satellite link by Joe Frazier in Philadelphia, on the anniversary of his victory over exs had in mind. What was also Muhammad Ali at Madison Square

significance intended? And why were en part in that fight?" How do you answer that? "Oh, about 4.3 International Pride Units"?

To be fair to Inverdale (if I must), that sort of nonsense is hardly his preserve, but he does have his own special brand of gaucheness. "Can you tell us about your left arm, which is all crocked?" is the kind of question arch piss-taker Chris Morris might have asked on Brass Eye, that fabulous news magazine parody from a couple of years ago. It wasn't all bad. There was some nice banter - when Frazier asked Nastase if he could give savour. "There is still something him some tennis lessons, he replied, "I will if you come to Romania and beat up all the politicians." But the human brain can only take so much fluffiness and cosiness before b ex-

There was more of it in Gary trophy be passed round the dressing-

as a bad guy in Italian action flicks, the mateyness was splattered all about "the hairball factor" (think a programme that seems determined to honour the spirit of the sillier bits of Sports Review of the Year.

Hansen and Merson fared no better, Inverdale spending 3min 39sec and 5min 56sec respectively on them. There was more Chris Morris to comic about the hop, step and jump", for example. No. No there isn't. His opening gambit with Merson was also a gem, as he inquired what the Middiesbrough player would do should the First Division Championship

Richardson's interview with Marvin room full of champagne. I was em-Hagler in Rome. Though it was in- barrassed for Merson, whose honest teresting to see what Marvelous serious approach was horribly offset Marvin is up to, establishing a career by the bantering tone. Inverdale wrapped up the interview by telling him, "In the words of the song, you over the screen. The Americans talk were knocked down and got back up again," a crass and clumsy reference Friends), and it's perfectly suited to Chumbawumba's No 1 drinking song. Nice touch, that, when you're interviewing an alcobolic.

He just meant it as a bit of fun. I guess. Maybe it's just me, maybe I've turned into a sour old git, but I want more. I want to be made to think, I want to be surprised. I don't want to feel that the 45 minutes squandered on watching On Side would have been better spent drilling a hole in my skull and sucking my brains out. Anybody who required even a minimal sense of having their horizons expanded would have ended up last Monday like me, screaming at the screen.







triumph.

It may not quite have been Twickenham, but a healthy crowd enjoyed

Lucy Mackillop.

Pre-match attention to detail by the Light Blues (bottom centre) a rumbustious atmosphere, the beer and the obligatory streaker, whose bravado was, it seems, fuelled at one

At times Oxford seemed almost of Cambridge's drinking societies.
With due sense of theatre perhaps,
he delayed his entry until the second

Dark Blues former captain Jo Hudson (1995-96, bottom left) must have 0171-293-2534.

to have gained a passing resem-blance to the All Blacks or so it may have seemed to spectators, whether inebriated, intrigued or merely

half and the players apparently inebriated, intrigued or merely found his antics "all jolly good fun".

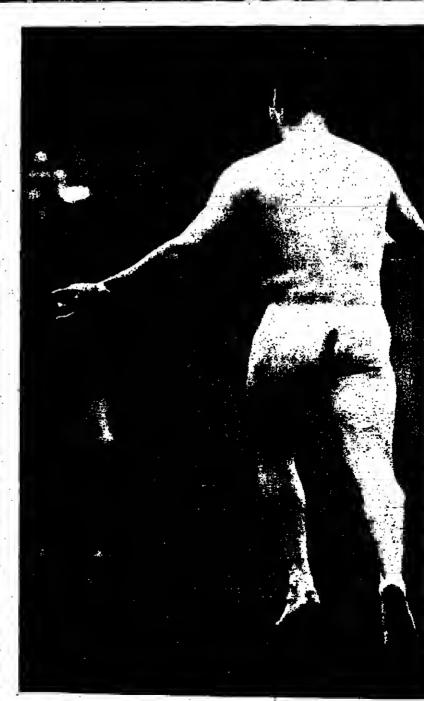
Oxford's ability to extend their winning streak was helped by a any others by the Independent's scrum and line-out that had a pro-fessional look about them. The down, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam - can be ordered by telephoning

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT HALLAM













Sampras' defeat puts Korda in pole position

PETE SAMPRAS' world No 1 status is in doubt after he lost 7-5, 6-3 to the unseeded Austrian Thomas Muster in the ATP Champions' Cup in Cali-

The victory for Muster, a former world No 1 himself, now ranked 20th, means the Australian Opeo champion, Petr Korda, can take top place with a win at Indian Wells, Korda, the second seed, beat the German teenager Tommy Haas 7-6, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals on Thursday.

Sampras was not the only big name to fall in the third round. Andre Agassi, who has worked his way up to 40th in the world from 141st last November, beat the third-seeded Australian Pat Rafter, the reigning US Open champion, 6-33-66-2 Agassi will face the lowest-ranked player left in the draw, the 126th-ranked wild card, Jan-Michael Gambill.

But Sampras' defeat, by a player who had won just one of

struggled throughout the whole match. I had some chances in the first, had a set point. Had some love-30 points."

Sampras, the Champions' Cup winner in 1994 and 1995 but a beaten quarter-finalist in 1996 and in the second round last year, said he still had not mastered the desert conditions. "1 Bohdan Ulihrach. don't know what it is about the conditions here," be said. "The ball seems to fly on me. I can't

Muster, who disputed the world Nn 1 place with Sampras in 1996, and grabbed the top spot for six weeks that year, said he could tell Samoras was struggling. He said: "You always play like your opponent allows you to play. But he wasn't serving as accurate as he used to. He made a lot of unforced errors. For whatever reason I don't know "

In the quarter-finals, Muster will face the Ukrainian Andrei player who had won just one of Medvedev, who beat Nicolas his three matches all year, Lapentti of Ecuador 6-1, 6-4.

leaning on Towers

ful," admitted Sampras. "I really seeded Chilean Marcelo Rios in a repeat of the Australian Open final Rios defeated German Nicolas Kiefer 6-4, 6-3.

The sinth-seeded Briton, Greg Rusedski, advanced with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Spain's Carlos Moya, setting up a clash with unseeded Swede Thomas Enqvist, a 6-2, 7-6 winner over

"I was very pleased with the way I played," said Rusedski, who had a first-round bye beplay the way I want to play, can't fore struggling to a 4-6, 6-3, 6-5 wing the way I want to swing, and have control of the ball."

fore struggling to a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Vince Spadea. I serv ed a lot better, played a serv ed a lot better, played a more solid overall game and fixed up a few areas I wasn't pleased with.

Rusedski, who has beaten the 25th-ranked Enqvist in three of their four previous encounters, served 12 aces and Moya never had a chance to break his opponent's serve. A strained left hamstring ruined Steffi Graf's latest come-

back from injury when she re-

tired in the third set of her Evert

Cup semi-final match with

Lindsay Davenport, Graf, who

THE American Ryder Cup

player Jeff Maggert, who

missed the cut in his past two

events, fired a five-under-par 67

the first round of the PGA

tle came at the 1993 Disney Clas-

sic, holed a seven-iron from 185

yards for an eagle on the par-four

sixth hole and added five birdies

fellow American Stewart Cink

Long-driving John Daly and

Daly, trying for his first win

ON THURSDAY it was the

wind that blew Seve Balles-

teros off course and up to 13

over par after 12 holes played

into the teeth of a gale at the

Moroccan Open. Yesterday a

stomach upset forced the Ryder

Cup captain to retire without

also withdrew, leaving 68 other

players to complete their first

rounds yesterday, some with

120

100% D.03 20 155 Snow show

Snow Reports supplied by Ski Hotline

15 B) Coudingto

Denmark's Steen Tinning

hitting another ball.

to offset a pair of bogeys.

Maggert, whose lone PGA ti-

Hooda Classic.

during her career, was trailing 6-4, 4-6, 4-2 to Davenport, the defending champion. Graf, 28, was playing in only her second tournament after taking nine months off after knee surgery. "It's like, what else?" said

has had a long list of ailments

Graf, who has numbered a bad back, bone spurs in her feet and the broken cartilage and torn tendon in her left knee that forced the surgery last June among her miuries. A hamstring strain was a new

experience. "This one I haven't had before," said Graf, who felt a pain after a sudden movement in the fifth game of the third set. She winced and clutched her thigh, but finished the game. After having her thigh strapped during the change-over, she tried to play, earning a break point against Davenport in the sixth game even though she was hobbled by the pain.

The minute it happened I knew," said Graf. "I always try. I almost made the game. 1 almost had a chance. But just standing there I was scared to



No pain, no gain: Steffi Graf has her leg strapped in a vain attempt to prolong her semi-final

Cricket: Fifth Test Regal Ramprakash defies the odds

After contributing substantially in England's victory at The Oval last August, he had every right to expect he would be a regular member of the side in the West Indies.

John Crawley had been dropped for that Test but by the time England arrived here in January, he had al-

Ramprakash was not even con- BLOFELD when it was sidered for a Test place at the start of the tour been caught behind before and if Crawley had been even moderately successful, his chance may never have come.

Crawley's selection was a clear case of nepotism by the 64 oot out and 34. powerful Lancashire cootingent running this tour. Captain Mike Athertoo seems to get his way regardless over just about everything while David Lloyd, the coach, and Boh Bennett, the manager, are also red rose stalwarts. Their up for what it was; a damaging piece of misjudgement.

There was oothing Ramprakash could do about

ON THIS tour of the West mentally stopped competing. Indies, Mark Ramprakash But not Ramprakash. He has come through a test of kept his composure and his character which many crick- sense of humour, and made eters would have failed. sure he would be ready if and when the call came.

In the third Test in Port of Spain it did come. Adam Hollioake's back ruled him out and Ramprakash was chosen but he woke up on the morning of the match with flu.

But still Ramprakash kept his sense of proportiuo and he continued to work at ready been pencilled in as his cricket. A score of 60 nn HENRY a spinoers pitch against Guyana

thought he had he had half a dozen, won him a place in the Georgetown Test. He fought hard io both innings on a difficult pitch for

Now, at Kensington Oval, he has made his first Test 100 to rescue England from what seemed to be an unmitigated disaster. Now that the higgest psychological barrier of all has heeo elimioated, he will make a great many more choice of Crawley was shown runs and hundreds for his country who, I believe, he will go oo to captain.

His latest achievement must be seen against this it except wait. I can think of background to be fully many who would have appreciated.

Bullets and Sharks Maggert seizes early one-stroke lead

Basketball

By Richard Taylor

BIRMINGHAM Bullets and Sheffield Sharks are depending on London Towers to boost their Budweiser League title chances this weekend by beating Greater London Leopards at Wembley tomorrow night.

Bullets and Sharks both have the chance of a double-win weekend, while Towers are desperate to compensate for slipping out of championship contention by spoiling the chances of their rivals, the league leaders and defending a factor by the time they play us." champions the Leopards.

Badminton

Rasmussen, has signed a record

sponsorship deal which could

earn him more than £300,000 in

the next two and a half years.

highest-paid player in the his-

backing Rasmusseo in a rack-

et, clothing and luggage en-

dorsement package which will

see him through the 2000 Syd-

The 23-year-old eojoyed his

biggest success to date last year,

when he woo the World Cham-

The Dane will receive a re-

a 76-72 midweek win over the Sharks and tomorrow play Derby Storm, who play Sheffield tonight. "Derby are a scary team and if their crowd get going it's the proverbial cauldron," Sharks' coach, Chris Finch, said, Derby, though, are likely to be without Tony Windless, who will also miss next weekend's All Star Game

with a thigh injury. Apart from seeing the title slip away, Towers also lost in the Uniball League Trophy final against Sheffield last weekend. But Leopards' coach, Billy Mims, said: "I don't think that will be

Laszlo Nemeth's fate as Eng-After Birmingham lost to land's coach will be decided to-Leopards last weekend, American by the English Basketball can Tony Dorsey said. We have Association board. Nemeth was to win our last nine games flow.

Nothing less will do.

Nothing less will do.

pionship in Glasgow, beating

Sun Jun of China in ooe of the

A spokesman for Carltoo

said: "Peter's game went from

strength to strength in 1997 and

with our support we are sure he

with more Grand Prix titles in

with an ankle injury but he

hopes to be fit for next mooth's European Championships in

Bulgaria and the Thomas Cup finals in Hong Kong in May.

Rasmussen is currently out

sport has known.

medal in Sydney."

tour, had birdies at two of the cohol rehabilitation. Rasmussen's record package final three holes.

By John Oakley

in Agadir

since his latest bout with alco- am doing the right things each holism; started on the 10th . day. The cravings for food have hole and tore up the back nine been tough, so I'm not going to with four birdies. But he played the froot side at even par and

settled-for second. "This is the best I've felt to grab a one-stroke lead after about my game ever," said Daly, whose four career victories including triumphs at the 1991 PGA Championship and 1995 British Open. In addition to alcohol problems at still fights food cravings.

It was the 17th time in his last 18 rounds that Daly has shot par or better, a streak that has earned him a tie for fourth in were one stacks off the pace. Scotland's Coint Montgomerie and the forms within Steve Pate are another stacks back at 69. Los Angeles and three other fin- seventh and a 35-foot birdie on ishes in the top 20. He has won \$204,850 (£125,000) in six starts, nearly twice as much as he won 14th and 16th, sinking a 10-foot-Montgomerie, still seeking last year when he missed two er oo the latter. "I have been

> "I've been hitting it very only won ooce. Sooner or later well," he said. "I practice and I'll get over the hump."

the 90s, and only six of the play-

ers unfortunate enough to be

drawn in the second half of the

field managed sub-par rounds.

It all left Des Smyth, who, in

ideal conditions yesterday morn-

ing, equalled the course record

with 64, eight under par, still lead-

Gronberg, of Sweden, and Pedro

Linhart, of Spain. Close behind

Ballesteros pulls out of desert purgatory

worry about my weight." Sixteen others are three behind Maggert, including the defeoding champion, Stuart Appleby of Australia, the 1987 champion, Mark Calcavecchia, Vijay Singh of Fiji, Bernhard Langer of Germany and the US veterain Join Watson, runner-up

in his tree prior 1998 events. Single appears set to extend the PGA's longest current streak of consecutive cuts made to 51.

developed yesterday and forced

play to be abandoned with half

tions were again ideal, calm and

sunny. Those completing their

opening rounds had only a 20-

minnte break before starting

under the rules, the second half

of the field in the first round have

Yesterday morning coodi-

the field still on the course.

Maggert gained momentum with a short birdie putt at the the ninth, then finished with birdies on two par-five holes, the his first win on the US PGA months after another stint in al- playing pretty well," Maggert said. "It does bug me that I've

Chichester are the first club

The Womeo's National

Fit Crutchley gives boost to Cannock

Hockey

By Bill Colwill

MARTIN GILBODY, Cannock's manager, was philosophical about their tough weekend, six of his players having returned only on Tuesday from the Azlan Shah Cup in

The good news for Cannock is that the leading National League goalscorer, Bobby Crutchley, who pulled out of the Malaysia trip on the eve of departure when he limped off at Hounslow after scoring a hattrick in their last League game should be fit for the game. Doubts surround Justin Pidcock, who was running a temperature yesterday.

Cannock, three forms aneau of Canterbury at the top of the Premier, today eotertain Southgate, who will be missing Soma Singh, in the league and tomorrow will be at home to Canterbury in the semi-final of the EHA Cup.

outside the National League ever to reach the Cup semi-finals and have to travel north in Beeston for the second semifinal. Although they will start as underdogs, they will face a Beeston side, who have a relegation game against Guildford to-IDOITOW.

League comes to a close today with Slough already Premier champions, Leicester having clinched the Divisioo One title and with Aldridge needing just a point to gain promotioo from the Secood Division.

Batsmen can enjoy old-fashioned pitch

the days wheo the many great batsmen produced by this tiny island of Barbados used to feast themselves against howlers from wherever they came.

Sir Clyde Walcott, like Sir Everton Weekes and Seymour Nurse, punished as many attacks as anyone in his heyday. It took Sir Clyde only an hour on the first

morning, eveo as England were tottering, to proclaim: "This looks to 1958. me like a 500 per innings draw". There have not beeo

many of those in recent times, in fact not since 1977. That was the period when the authorities became fedup with a succession of high-scoring stalemates and into the lifeless surface It was also a period that

coincided with the emergence of the great fast bowling quartets which were to be the backhooe of West Indian domination of world cricket in the 1980s.

Prior in that you would pay your money and come to Keosingtoo knowing full well that you were going to series.

THIS is Kensington Oval as witness the outstanding bats-it used to be. This is a pitch meo of the day treat you to meo of the day treat you to that reminds old-timers of an exhibition of stroke play. Bowlers were reduced to mere drawers of water and hewers of wood.

Of the 10 Tests between 1955 and 1974 nine were drawn. There were three totals over 600 and seven over 500. It was here that Pakistan's

Hanif Mohammed accumulated the longest innings io Test cricket, remaining COZIER

999 minutes for his 337 in

Sixteeo years later Lawrence Rowe took his memorable 302 off England and the likes of Sir Garry Sobers, Bob Simpson, Bill Lawry and Worrell helped themselves to double cen-

As Mark Ramprakash decided to inject some life and Graham Thorpe mounted their restorative partnership towards the end of the first day and intu the second, the prospects of similar run gluttooy were real. Brian Lara, Shivnarine Chanderpaul aod Carl Hooper would have been licking their chops in anticipatinn of scores that were impossible oo the inferior pitches earlier io the

Sporting Digest

ney Olympic Games.

Nicol survives as seeds tumble out

AUSTRIA

BUR GARIA

CANADA

FRANCE

NORWAY

SWITZERLAND

UNITED STATES

rapahoe Basin ___Firm packed snow

THE world champion, Peter most dramatic matches the

tainer in additioo to a bonus can go on to even greater suc-

scheme which will make him the cess, crowning his world title

tory of badmintoo. Carlton are 1999 and an Olympic gold

PETER NICOL, the world No 1, one was the sole seed to survive the quarter-finals as a series 15-6, 15-9, 15-9. of upsets surrounded his progress into the last four of the Austrian Open in Linz yesterday. Even the Scot had to fight for his place in the semis, com-

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The Australian world cham-No 2, went down in another five-game marathoo, relinquishing a 2-1 lead to lose 15-

AROUND THE RESORTS

ing from two games down to 12, 11-15, 16-17, 15-5, 15-13 to beat Alex Gough, the fifth- the English world doubles seeded Welsh No 1, 13-15, 8-15, champinn, Mark Cairns, who was only in the draw as a lucky loser because Jansher Khan, of pion, Rodoey Eyles, seeded Pakistan, withdrew from the eveot at the last minute to seek advice from a knee

90% . D.03

100% 5.03

ALL-ENGLAND CHAMPPONSHIPS (Birm-ingham) Men's singles quarter-finaler Org Ewe Hock (Melley) tit H Arbi (Indon) 27-5 15-8 Sun Jun (CO) fot Yong Hock Kin (Malley) 5-4 15-2; H Hendrawur (Indon) bit J van Dijk 6: Sun Jun (Ch) 10 Yeng Hock Rn (Maley) 5: 5-5-6. 4: 5-2: H Handrawen (Indon) 12: J San Dir. (Handray) 5: 4: 5-2: H Handrawen (Indon) 12: J San Dir. (Handray) 6: 5-5: Wommen: alongies quarter-fereix: Gong Zhicheo (Ch) bit Kim J-hun (5 ko) 11: J 11: 2: C Martin (Den) bit Warg Chen (Ch) 13: 11: 4: P Zheong (Ch) bit Audine, gradon) 11: 5: 11: 8: Zheng Neng (Ch) bit Del Yun (Ch) 2: 9: 7: 17: 11. Basketball

NBA: Marif 97 Chresent A; Delta 104 Chica-po 97 (at): Houston 115 New Jersey 104; San Antonio 97 Sacramento 86; Deriver 98 Yan-couver 93; Portland 95 Minnesota 82; Los An-geles Lakars 108 Los Angeles Cippers 85. Billiards

STRACHAN WORLD MATCHELAY CHAMP-IONSHIP (Liverpoot) First round: M Kotheri (mt) bt E Hughes (r) 4-1; D Causer (Erng) bt M Rehani (md) 4-0; A Chepman (Erng) bt A Goeriaa (md) 4-0; P Sheehen (Erng) bt C Shutt (Eng) 4-3.

Bowls

Scotland won the Home international Championship at Swansea for the seventh time in eight years yesterday when they beet Wates 114-100. when they beet Weles 114-100.

HOME INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (Sweamer): Scotland bt Wales 114-100 (Scotlard): Robins 21-87, A Marshall bt J Greenstale 21-87, B Gourley to N Anshy 9-87, R McCalboth bt J Price II-57, W W Wood bt P Rowards 17-87, G Robertatin lost to R Weale 59-21.

Boxing

Joe Catzona, of Wales, has pulled out of his World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title defence against Paraguay's Juan Carbis Gimenaz in Carbist on 21 March with a damaged wrist. The rest of bill has been switched to York Hall, Bethnal Green, and Jah benefitson in the Prince and will be headined by Mark Prince, the unbester International Boxing Federation and WBO Inter-Continental light-heavy-weight champion. Ulster's Ray Close has pulled out of wasers may uses has puried out of his contest with the international Box-ing Organisation super-middleweight champion, Made Larsen, on 20 March in Aarhus, Denmark, after injuring his back. No new date has yet been

WORLD BOXING UNION LIGHTWELTER-WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP (Liverpool, Transday): S Neary (Liverpool, holder) to A Holigen (Liverpool) at 8th.

horrendous scores after their Raymond Burns, the German

battle through atrocious weath- Alex Cejka and Australia's

er conditions. In all, 48 players Stephen Leaney, all of whom

failed to break 80; three were in shot 68 before the gale force wind

ing by three shots from Mathias their second rounds because,

were Smyth's Irish compatriot to go out first in the second.

SHEFFIELD SHEELD (Second day of four) Melbourne: Remarks \$73 for 9 dec (D F Hills 126, S Young 81); Victoria 197 for 4. Brisbarne: Ouernistend 197 (M L Low 62); Western Australia 405 for 8 (6 P Julian 94, 3 M Katich 80). Newscartie: South Australia 352 (D Pitzgard 65); New South Weise 187 for 8 (C J Richards 61). Footbali

SCOTLAND B SQUAD (Friendly v Wales B, Cumbermadd, 24 March): Goold (Colid Main (St Johnstone), Cleland (Rengers), 1

(Motherwall).
THEMSOAY'S LATE RESULTS: Relien Cup semi-firsts second leg! Lazio 2 Juventus 2 (e.g.: 3-2): Plarme 2 Milan 2 (e.g.: 2-2; Milan won on every goels niel. Distin Cup semi-ter-flasts PSV Enchoven 4 Feyerboard 0. Pronch Langue Cup semi-timet: Peris St-Germain 2 Laris 1. Ryman Langue Pull Members Cup fourth round: Borsham Wood 2 Yeaching 2 (after some time, Yearling won 3-0 on penalitical). Golf

Golf
The Golf Foundation is launching a fiveyear £L3m grass roots junior development programme aimed at
reversing a worrying trend for the
sport: an ageing politing population.
ROYAL MOROCCAN OFEN (Apadir) Early
leading second-round scores (SR or M usless stated): 138 M Davie 71 85, 141 R Karlsson (Swe) 70 71, 144 A Russal 75 89, 146 S
Henderson 78 65: A Cathren (Arg) 77 75, 147
A Hunter 76 71; MA Marth (SQ) 87 75; H Trid
(Ger) 77 70, 148 M Goggir (Aust) 77 77; G
Hutcheon 72 78; M Farry (FI) 76 73.
HONEDA CLASSIC (Coral Springs, Rorida)
Laeding first-round scores (US unless stateunit 67) Haogent 69, 104 (Se), 69 S Pols,
C Morspomerie (SS), 70 T Nales, T Walson, M
Calcassocials, V.Singh (Fi), B Larger (Ger), K
Sutherland, B Creaman, R Howleon, L Mctilacs, L Janzen, S Acquibly (Aust), B Sistes, D Harnmont, J Kelly, B Geberger, B Frend, Selectado
73 S Lylo (SB), 78 J Perrenki (Sen), E Bs (SA)

Paralympics

Rugby Union

Sailing

Averaging 20.5 knots, the all-women crew of the 92-foot catamaran Royal & Sun Alliance yesterdey clocked 493 miles in 24 hours. This puts them less than two days behind the world record schedule, set by the Frenchman Offvier de Kersauson, 38 days into their quest to set a new best time of less then 71 days and 20 hours. Britain's Ben Ainsile took the gold medal in the Laser class at the ISAF World Champlonships in Dubal. (Ass) 17 us Lees Cases a la et Shr World Championships in Dubal. ISAF WORLD CHAMPIONESHIPS (Bubal) Sin-glebaseded Open: Final positions: 1 B Amile (CE) 83pts; 2 M Stockhum (Ass) 94; 3 D Birg-mark (Swe) 101.

The Olympic super-G champion, Picabo Street of the United States, broke her leg yesterday in a crash at the final women's World Cup downhill of the season in Crans Montana, Switzerland, Street came back less than sty months ago from a serious knee injury. The race was called off, world for penns to powerful. (Crans Montana) WORLD CUP HEN'S DOWNHILL (Crime Mon terre, Swift: 1 J Strobl (Aut) 1min 30,54se;; 2 I Cuche (Swift) 1:31:35; 3 F Stobl (Aut) 1:31:35; H Kreune (Aut) 1:31:48; 5 K (Shedine) (B) 1:31:57 Physic downhill standinge; 1 A Schilline (Aut)

Squash

SUITIO
SPENING GRAND TOURNAMENT (Conta) State days Assistantia (Non 4, lost 2) in Velatamenta (A-2); Notation (A-3); Edited (A-2); Notation (A-3); Edited (A-2); Notation (A-3); Edited (A-3); Edited

NUMBER

TODAY'S

1,000 The number of rand [£121]

that Paddy Upton, fitness trainer to the South African cricket team, was fined yesterday by his national governing body after being found guilty of misconduct but innocent of making racist comments to the crowd during the second Test against Pakistan in Durban, Upton was held to have threatened the complainant with injury.



Henry Blofeld's West Indies Update

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laugh about at the expense of the national team jeopardised their Warld Cup qualification in Rome last October, but there must have been loud guffaws around the board rooms of Serie.-i clubs yesterday when Crystal Palace announced that they were placing their fate in the hands of the invisible man, Attilio Lombardn, whn will act as player-coach until the end of this season, when the club hope that Terry Venables will take over.

A fleeting appearance as substitute in the 6-2 defeat at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday apart, nne could be excused for thinking that the Italian had long since left the club, so little has been seen of him, due to a catalogue of injuries since his arrival

But there he was large as life at the cluh's ramshackle Mitcham training ground yesterday to hear Steve Coppell, who he replaces, annunce in a gobsmacked gathering of English and Italian media thal Palace were pinning their hopes of survival on a complete novice. And before the assembly could close their mouths, be added that Lombardn would be assisted by fellow striker Tomas Brolin, who is on a week-to-week contract at the club and has an English appearance record even more limited than Lombardo's.

"I realise it is a bold, massive step," said Coppell, whn returns in his role as director of nf people will look upon as being foolish, but something had to be done. It might not work, the-field politics."

ITALY have not had much to An invisible Italian is the new man in charge English this scason ever since our at Selhurst Park. Clive White reports

> but at the moment everyone expects us to go down anyway -it's only the people within these walls who think we've got a fighting chance of staying up."

> It is an appointment that is probably par for the course at the moment at a club which seems intent on upstaging itself when it comes to hizarre decisions. Ron Noades, the chairman, and Mark Goldberg, the cluh's prospective owner, were both conspicuous by their absence (though Goldberg had heen at the training ground before the press arrived, possibly practising his hall-juggling skills à la Michael Knighton) and it was left to poor Coppell to field the questions that rained in nn him.

He accepted responsibility for the club's plight and the appointment of Lombardo, following consultation with Noades and Goldberg. Recent months at the club had been like "slow strangulation", he said. "In an ideal world I wouldn't be speaking to you - Palace would be in mid-table and I would be manager. But we are drifting down the league and I felt very strongly something had to be done.

"I'm very sad at the club's position and I am responsible, the buck always stops with the manager. I want as much as possible to release Attilio from that kind of pressure. I want him to confootball, "and a step that a lot centrate on what matters - the preparation of the team - and not get involved in any of the off-

Lombardo was given half an

hour to think about the offer, after being summoned to a hotel on Thursday evening by Goldberg. Having agreed, he said through an interpreter, that he felt as if, "the hotel roof was falling in on me." He was still reeling from the magnitude of his decision and hoped that he would not get home and find his wife packing to leave.

He did nnt envisage too many changes just yet with today's game at Villa Park followed smartly by another, on Wednesday at Newcastle, after which they have 10 days' respite. He lamented the shortage of

midfielders at the club (not helped by the recent sale of Andy Roberts) and will no doubt be relieved to hear that the club is in the process of negotiating the transfer of Sasa Curcic from Aston Villa for £1m nn Monday.

The player-coach stressed that it was only a temporary appointment and that be intended to return to being "simply a player" at the end of the season.

It was on Wednesday that Lombardo's fellow countryman and friend, Gianhica Vialli, did his own player-manager career some good with that annihilation of Palace. Lombardo said that he would be ringing Vialli. "Gian-luca is in a similar position, although he is driving a Formula One car, as it were, while I'm in charge of a sinking ship," he said. "His advice will help but he will not solve my problems."



Worried look Lombardo contemplates his appointment yesterday

squad for the first time,

Liverpool's Mark Kennedy

has been ruled out of the Re-

public of Ireland's friendly in-

ternational against the Czech

Republic in Olomouc on 25

March. The 22-year-old winger

damaged tendons in his hand

least three weeks.

BBC lose Gullit to ITV

ITV Sport have signed up Ruud Gullit from under the nose of the BBC for the World Cup. Gullit had been expected to be part of the Beeb's World Cup team this summer, but ITV they had signed Gullit on a two- North-east roots. year deal to help present ITV's flagship games in the Champions' League and FA Cup as well ropean Championships, Gullit year's FA Final on 16 May.

Alan Hansen and Gary Linek- Rangers are interested and that's er and now I'll be in a very priv- as much as I am prepared to say." ileged position working with professionals I also respect, ter Smith insists that Gascoigne, such as Bob Wilsoo, Alex who is sidelined with a calf in-Ferguson, Revin Keegan and Terry Venables, nn ITV."

Robson makes a move for Gascoigne BRYAN ROBSON has asked

Paul Gascoigne's agent, Mel Stein, to sound out the Rangers and England midfielder over a possible move to Middlesbrough.

The Boro manager is a longstanding admirer of Gascoigne and wants Stein to find out if he Sport announced yesterday that favours a move back to his

"I have not approached Rangers, or [the Rangers chairman David Murray, but, as as France 98 and the 2000 Eu-there does seem to be some truth that Rangers will let Gazza go, will make his ITV debut at this I have spoken to Stein," Robsoo said. "I have asked him to find Gullit said: "I've enjoyed out whether Gazza would be in-

> jury at present, is not being pushed out of lbrox, despite re

ports of a loan deal with Crystal Palace. "Someone has come in so we

have looked at the offer and asked Paul: How do you feel about that?" "Smith said. "He has one or two considerations outside football to take in which mean he would not be averse to a move outside Scotland.

"A lot of players are stimulated by new clubs and I think that Paul might be one of those. I think that if he was looking at himself then he may be thinking that at the end of the season fresh pastures would be the right thing for him and good

The Rangers manager Wal-

who turned in a brilliant display against England at Wembley recently, in his squad to face Blackburn at Goodison today.

However, protracted negotiations mean the move for the Coln Colo player is on hold. "It seems that people are touting the player around looking for a huyer," Kendall said. Steve Thompson has made

his first signing as Sheffield United manager with the capture of Paul Devlin from Birmingham. The 25-year-old striker has had an operation to correct will cost the Blades £200,000, plus an additional £50,000 if the and will be out of action for at club are promoted.

his career."

ADETIGENT'S EOIN JESS is back in the Scotland squad after an absence of 21 months, Jess is now certain to partner Black-ton over the Chilean midfielder Jose Luis Sierra. The Everton manager had hoped to have the 29-year-old Sierra, club-mate, the central defend-special points and point and point and point the control of the control of

Doncaster lay off coaches He, like Jess, last figured for

Scotland in the Euro 96 cam-DONCASTER ROVERS, who are 12 points adrift at the paign. Gavin Strachan, the Coventry midfielder and son of bottom of the Third Division, the Sky Blues manager, Gorhave laid off their coaches, don, is named in the Under 21. Dave Cowling and Paul Ward, as part of a series of cutbacks.

The manager, Mark Weaver, has told the players they are only required to turn up on matchdays because there would be nobody to coach them for the rest of the week.

Cowling and Ward had both been working with the first team. The former Stockport and Rotherham boss Danny Bergara will stay on at the ciu

to coach the juniors. Rovers have also agreed settlements with players Simon Island and Darren Utley to cancel their contracts while their former skipper Ian Gore

Smith sets his mind on resurrecting Rangers

WALTER SMITH shrugged off speculation over Paul Gascoigne's future yesterday and set day. The Rangers manager Park for the third time this seacome away with a victory.

With the England midfield-

week, Smith is anxinus to reaf- Call - apparently for the first firm that securing a 10th suc- time in the midfielder's career remains his priority. Gascoigne icent about discussing Gasand Brian Laudrup will again be coigne's situation further.

play at Dundee. With the loss of the injured Sergio Parrini and Gordon Durie and the suspensions of to keep the pressure up nn the

- Smith is understandably ret-

"He is still a Rangers player, and by all accounts he might be fit in time for Wednesday," cerned, the only problem I have got is tomorrow's game. It is one that we really need to win

BRYAN ROBSON wants more larly after two had defeats and

By Ian Rodgers

of the same from his side after nine goals against." Robson the 6-0 win over Swindnn in midweek. The Middlesbrough back to being the best away manager hopes his side can re- team in the First Division." establish themselves as the best away side in the First Division at Portsmouth inday after connone in their last two matches nn the road,

"I was pleased with nur at Gigg Lane in November.

Middlesbrough asked for more of the same overall performance against From today until the end of Swindon in midweek particu-

> The Teessiders' rivals for the aiming to stop Bury's revival at beaten in nine games but Forest want revenge after their defeat

> said. "We have now got in get

the season, referees will indicate to the fourth official how much stoppage time will be played at the end of each half in all Nationwide League games. He will then hold up a board to in-

dicate the minimum amount of title, Nottingham Forest, will be time that will be added. The system, which was pioneered in ceding nine goals and scoring the City Ground. Bury are un- Italy, will also be used in the son knowing they have yet to play-off finals and the Coca-Cola Cup final between Chelsea and Middlesbrough.

cessive Premier Division title his sights on reviving his side's missing through injury, both title challenge at Motherwell to- having only an nutside chance of being fit for Wednesday's takes his injury-hit squad to Fir Scottish Cup quarter-final re- he said. "But, as far as I am con-

er's future duminating this Richard Gough and Stuart Mo- two teams above us."

only a 1-1 draw, with Paul Ince scoring for the visitars

Dye-soaked Gazza is strung up by the ankles



THE **GAFFER TAPES**

chances of signing Paul Gasnow there's been a conspiracy against me. It's not just the usual stuff, our team playing poorly, apposition goalkeepers having hlinders, refs only seeing penalties for the other side. After you've been in the game as lnng as I have you realise every manager thinks that. It goes with the job.

No, this was different. I've been followed, my neighbours have had strange people asking questions about me, vile rumours have been spread. At first I thought it was the Child Support Agency, or a private dick for nne of my ex-wives. I've had all that in the past but we're all on good terms at pre-

Then I unticed that every the dustmen came, someone was going through my wheel-

was opened a bucket of purple coigne, literally, hut it was dye would fall on the perpe-hardly my fault. For weeks trator and one of those mantraps which leave a blake hanging from a tree by his ankle would whip into action. It was one of those times when my days in the scouts came in

> Late that night there was a to see a chubby figure hanging upside down, red dye dripping from his head, saying "way-ch mon, whit's ga-wan on?" It was Gazza. He'd come round to ask me to sign him. We'd spoken on the phone

earlier. "Only Crystal Palace really want me," he had said. "I'm desperate, I can't go there. Thomas Brolin's already snaffled the seat next to the dinner lady and he's also tuck shop monitor. The dressing-room's Wednesday, the night before not going to be big enough for both of us."

However, just before he ie hin. So I booby-trapped it, knocked on my door he opened

Bar wrappers... splat.

He took it badly. "I'd rather put up with a Swede than look he said, "at last". Then he like a beetroot," be said before storming off in tears. He would have bumped into that blake from the Premier League's bungs commission as he went, but fortunately the guy had a big pair of rubber gloves on so sudden commotion. I went out he was able to keep Gazza away. Funny that he happened to be in the area.

It's a shame though, I even had João Havelange's backing for my bid. Good old Jo, be can always be relied upon for patronage, he's now told Germany, Brazil, South Africa. Australia and England they have his support for 2006. He's made a career out of telling people what they want to hear. The incredible thing is, it still works, just look at the beadlines this week. You could aimost hear Tone and Mandy thinking

"wow, what an operator". Fifa has got a few things

al he could hardly talk. "At last", went quiet as he thought of all the tackles from behind that slashed his ankles and finished his beautiful career. "The horror, the horror," he whispered hefore he put the phone down. They should use a special orange card for these dismissals

The decision to ban reserve goalies from joining the squad until summoned is handy as well - it could be a nice little earner. I've formed the World Cup Goalie Camp Pic to accommodate keepers from places like Argentina, Brazil, South Korea and South Africa who are going to be 10-16 hours flying time from France. We're only a few hours by Channel Tunnel so they're much better off staying in Studgethorpe. .

and name it the Van Basten in

his honour.

For a small fee they can kip

I THINK I've blown nur 1 rigged up a few wires so if it chances of signing Paul Gas. was one ped a bucket of purple Bar wrappers... splat. right though. Marco rang up hostel (the lads will be home as this week, he was so emotion-it's off-season). Bruno, down the local caff, has promised to introduce a few foreign recipes such as pasta, rice, curry, quiche and burritos though neither he nor Rover looked too happy when I told him South Koreans eat dog.

Ivor Panic will give them daily training sessions and there's a jogging path along the canal towpath. We're knocking together a brochure and in case all that doesn't work we're including a few pictures of Swettie Bettie.

Meanwhile, Shann Prone's out again this week after he argued with me about team selection. He think's he should be in it. He claims there's a clause in his contract says he has to play but there isn't any longer, the chairman had it drawn up in invisible ink. With Ivor Niggie gone to West Ham nn loan I'm down to the bare bones.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

SIDELINES

Pickering the pick of the switchers

COLIN HENDRY and COLIN HENDRY and Chris Sutton could have been playing in each other's EX-FILES positions today had their true vocations not been



1. Noeful roppy rophy

spotted. Blackburn Rovers' visit to Everton stirs memories of another player who switched roles - ond clubs - with striking consequences. Fred Pickering was a mediocre full-back who Blackburn converted into a centre-forward good enough to land an

£85,000 move to Everton 34 years ago this month. There he partnered Roy Vernon, whose talents Rovers had also cashed in nn. The timing of Pickering's transfer was dis-astrous for the Ewood Park club, who had been well placed to win the championship for the first time in 50 years. They had to wait until 1995 to finish top.

Howard Kendall, now in his fourth spell at Everton, was

player-manager at both clubs. In 1981, during his first stint in the Goodison hot seat, he went back to Blackburn for his coach, Mick Heaton, goalkeeper Jim Arnold, and Glenn "Killer" Keeley, the Hendry of his day, whn was sent nff half an hour into his one loan appearance (a 5-0 home de-

feat by Liverpool). Keith Newton, whn himself started in artack, had represented England as a Second Division right-back before Everton bought him from Blackburn. Others with a dual connection include Harry Leyland, Matt Woods, Duncan McKeuzie, John Bailey, Alan Irvine and Bobby Mimms. However, it was not until Kenny Dalglish was united with Jack Walker's wallet in 1991 that Rovers reversed the drain in talent, signing Mike Newell for £1.1m.

Ten things that Arsenal's Liberian Christopher Wreh might be missing today



His home city, the warravaged capital, Mnnrovia. Like Highbury, its but more flexible. inhabitants would prefer to be elsewhere. 2 Gurley Street, the liveli-

bars and clubs. 3 A glass of home brew palm wine, often accompanied in Liberia by a home-grown grass spliff. Not the kind of thing that Mnnrovia's Saville Row. any Gunner would in-

dulge in, of course. 4 Swimming, fishing and watersports at Lake Piso. 5 A trip to the Firestone world's largest. Said to dium.

be as interesting as Arsenal sides of the Eighties, 6 A day trip to Bangor beach, one of several close

to the Liberian capital. est area in Monrovia for . 7 A bottle of Club beer in a chop bar (roadside cafe). 8 Pepper soup and fufu (fermented cassava).

9 Buying cheap, quality suits on Benson Street, 10 Development plans rooted in reality. President Charles Taylor wants his country to improve "step by step." Arsenal rubber plantation, the want to buy Wembley sta-

NAME OF THE GAME No 26: THE McCAIN STADIUM

Grounds bearing the name of a sponsor - such as Boltoo's Reebok Stadium or Stoke's Britannia Stadium - are a comparatively recent development, but Scarborough changed the name of their home as long ago as 1988. McCain Foods, one of the higgest employers in the town, have sponsored what was the Athletic Ground for 10 years and are expected to renew their agreement when it expires next year.





On 13 March 1991, Manchester United travelled to

Southampton without a League win for two months. Trailing the First Division's joint leaders, Arsenal and Liverpool, by 16 points, United were unable to end their lean spell, and managed

after Neil Ruddock had put the Saints ahead. United's patch of indifferent form (blamed on their preoccupation with European giory) was not the only subject that week to be echoed now. Terry Venables and Paul Gascoigne, both

currently being linked to

Crystal Palace, were making news seven years ago as well. Venables' attempt to buy Tottenham put him in the headlines, while Gazza was linked to Lazio, and then moved for £8.5m.

HISTORY LESSON

As Bristol City and Bristol Rovers prepare for their vital Second Division promotion game today, supporters of the two clubs might think back to the 1989-90 season. It was a remarkable year for the Bristol clubs, who finished first and second in the old Third Division.

Their first meeting at Ashton Gate in September finished goalless, hut as the season wore on Joe Jordan's City began to set the pace.

City went top in January and, apart from a brief spell in March, stayed there until the penultimate game of the season when they faced their greatest rivals, Gerry Francis's Rovers, who won 15 and drew five of their last 21 games, won 3-0 tn displace City at the tnp nf the table. Both teams won their final matches and filled the two automatic promotion places.

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

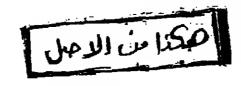
infless sisted

Millow Debbtas (defender) Olympistos
(Sr) to Newcastie (22m); Andy Roberts
(miditatier) Crystal Patace to Winbiedon (518m); Marion Beresford (goalfeeper) Burniey to Middlesstrough
(240,000); Jamie Ctaphem (defender) Totterham to Ipawich (2300,000;Paul Devilin (breazd) Birminghem to
Sheffald Uar (5200,000); Lee Malco
(miditatier) Huddenfield to Hearts
(275,000); Jeson van Blerir (defender)
Manchestar Chy to West Bromwich Alblon (250,000); Imy Onutora (forward)
Gillingham to Swindon; David Kerstelee
(defender) Ipawich to Swindon; O'rivelate
Domaidason (forward) Sheffled Wedheadsy to Stoke; Chris Klevonnya (forward)
Ansenal to Huddensfield; Richard

Jobson (delender) Leeds to Man-chester City; Nell Whitworth (delend-er) Kimarnock to Wigar; Julian Alsop florward) Bristol Rovers to Swensea; Damien Hilton (forward) Norwich to Brighton; Gary Mistrindelle (forward) Notis County to Rotherham; Craig Alidaley (forward) Bradford City Hartle-pool.

Loans/trials Steve Nicol (defender) Sheffield Wed-nesday to West Bromwich Albion, Peul Beeslay (deitender) Manchester City in West Bromwich; John Spenser for-ward) Queen's Park Rangera to Ever-torn; Dave Barnett (defender) Duntermine to Port Vate, Andy Walk-er (forward) Sheffield Unit to Pastel Rovers; Jan Veenhof (defender) Gro-ningen (Neth) to loewich (triat).

Contributora: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelines, Sports Desk, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL e-mell address: sport @ independent.co.uk



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*Woeful week for stroppy Stoichkov

A LISTLESS Bulgarian side were beaten 2-0 in a friendly international in Buenos Aires this week - a result which was something of an embarrassment for Bulgaria's top striker, Hristo Stoichkov.

On arrival in Bnenos Aires, Stoichkov had said that, without their former captain, Diego Maradona, Argentina "did ool exist." The result helped to prove that his statement was somewhat fatuous - and Stoichkov was ineffective and was substituted at the interval.

Stoichkov's replacement. Emil Kostadinov, another veteran forward, fared even worse. He was sent off for elbowing the home defender, Mauricio Piñeda. The Fiorentina striker, Gabriel Batistuta, and Valencia's Claudio Lopez scored in each half for Argeotina.

There was more bad news for Stoichkov yesterday. Having travelled to Argentina without the permission of his club, Barcelona, he discovered that his contract with the Catalan club had been terminated.

The 36-year-old Maradona meanwhile, is pondering yet another comeback, this time with an Argeotinian Second Division club, All Boys.

"I doo't want pressure or problems of any sort, my wish is just to enjoy myself and help the club win promotion," said Maradona, who abandooed his last return with Boca Juniors back in October.

THE former national captain Rai was recalled by Brazil for the first time in nearly four years this week, while the volatile striker Edmundo found himself

friendly away to Germany in if they stick by their decision. Stuttgart on Wednesday week. month's Gold Cup after being left in the cold for six mooths for indiscipline last year, was dropped again, apparently due to his stormy relationship with



FOOTBALL AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALE

Rai won the last of his 47 caps in the semi-final of the 1994 World Cup against Sweden. The coach, Mario Zagallo, has now giveo Rai another chance. following his resurgence with the French club, Paris St-Germain. However, Zagallo said: "This does not guarantee him a place in the squad for the World Cup. We must see."

THE top Albanian club Partizan Tirana are to boycott the league championship because of repeated attacks on players and referees inside stadiums.

Partizan decided on the boycott following an attack on the referee and his assistants in a match last month in Elbasani. The match officials said they were beaten in their changing room by a small group of Elbasani supporters at balf-time.

Partizan, in second place in the league, will continue their boycott until the government and the football federation can Rai was one of 12 foreign- be stamped out. They could be based players picked for a relegated to the Second Division

In an unrelated incident, the Edmuodo, recalled for last Partizan coach Pedat Musta is in a coma in hospital after being shot and seriously wounded. A ocighbour in Tirana has allegedly admitted to the crime for "personal reasons".



finals begin in France

Rene Simoes, the coach of Jamaica, already has six English-bom-players in his World Cup squad – and he may be about to add some more. "Maybe I can go for 10 overal," he said this week, adding that the Jamaican Football Federation has been inundat-ed with requests from players with a Jamaican heritage hoping to get a late ticket to tha World Cup. He refused to give names, citing confidentiality requested by the applicants. However, any newcomer is bound to kick a Jamaican off the team – and Simoes wants to keep the peace. "If it breaks the chemistry, I'll aend them [the newcomers] back," the coach promised.

Ajax make move for unsettled Kinkladze

AIAX want to sign the unsettled denied reports they are trying Georgi Kinkladze, but oothing will be concluded this weekend, according to City's manager, Joe

The Dutch clubs have made international, who has put in a written transfer request, hut no move is immioent and a transfer has oot been discussed, Royle said yesterday.

Kinkladze trained with his team-mates yesterday morning, following his recovery from an ankle iojury, and will play in tomorrow's First Division relegation six-pointer at Port Vale.

Meanwhile, Royle will speak to the Sheffield Wednesday manager. Ron Atkinson, in the next few days in an attempt to extend Lee Briscoe's loan spell at the club. But the loan move of the defender David Morley to Ayr seems likely to fall through because he needs international clearance.

The Football League chairman, David Sheepshanks, has tried to allay fears that leading First Division clubs are about to form their owo super league. First Division clubs have

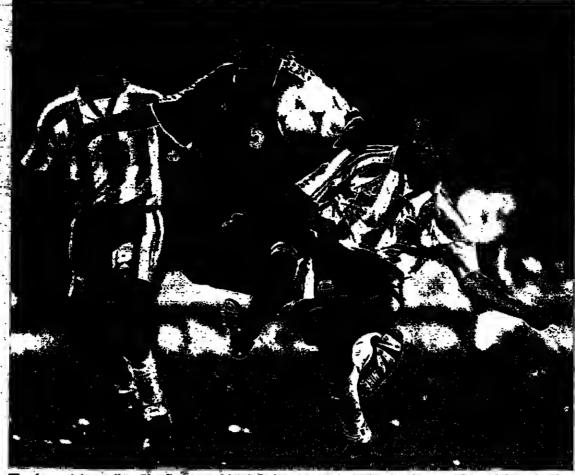
Manchester City playmaker, to create their own breakaway league to try to bridge the financial gap between the Premier League and Nationwide League. But those sides likely to lose out if the big clubs did an inquiry about the Georgian go it alone are still fearful of moves they believe would put their future in jeopardy.

However, Sheepshanks has invited representatives from the First Division steering committee and the ocwly formed Division Two and Three committee to a meeting next week to discuss the future - and is keen to make it clear that he believes that the smaller sides have oothing to fear.

He said: "Talk of breakaways and secret deals have been roundly refuted by Division One themselves and to my knowledge have no foundation whatsoever. "I've written to all club chair-

meo urging them not to overreact and to find commoo ground so that we can complete the positive improvements that we are now close to achieving.

"Grassroots football in this. country will becefit from a stronger and united Football



The Argentinian striker Claudio Lopez (right) finds room to shoot despite the attentions of the Bulgarian defender Ilia Grulev in Tuesday's friendly in Buenos Aires, which Argentina won 2-0

Third Division

Major fixtures and pools check TODAY FA Carling Premiership 1 Aston Vila v Crystal Palace 2 Barnsley v Southampton ... Lincoln City v Rochde Scarborough v Leyton Orient 3 Botton v Sheffield Wednes 4 Everton v Blackburn Shrewsbury v Peterborough **Bell's Scottish League** - Menchester Utd v Arse 5 Newcastle v Coventry ter Utd v Arsenal (†125am). 5 Tottenham v Liverpoo 7 West Ham v Chelsee 40 Dunfermine v Aberder 42 Motherwell v Ranger 43 St Johnstone v Hibernian Nationwide Football Leagu First Division 9 Bradford City v Birmingham 10 Huddersfield v Tremmers ... 11 Norwich v West Bromwich... 12 Notingham Forest v Bury... 13 Oxford Utd v Stoke 14 Port Vale v Manchester City 15 Bertenouth v Middleshyoun First Division 45 Dundee v Morton. Second Division 15 Portsmouth v Middlesbroug 16 CPR v Swindon 17 Sheffield Utd v Reading..... 18 Stockport v Ipswich..... 49 Ctyde v Inverness CT Second Division 20 Bournemouth v Wreicher Albion Rovers v Cowdenb 22 Burnley v Luton 23 Carliele v Brentford ... 24 Fulham v Milwell Arbreath v Alica. East Stirling v Berwick Rangers Cusen's Park v Dumbarton Ross County v Montrose TOMORROW FA Carling Premiership 30 Wigen v Oldham ... 31 Wycombe v Plymo Derby v Leeds (4.0)...

Nationwide Football League

Charlton v Sunderland (1.0)

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division

Cettic v Dundee Utd (3.0)

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE OFFER

A football philosopher à la Cantona

Emmanuel Petit used to think football the most important thing in life. Now he knows better, but as he prepared for this morning's showdown at Old Trafford it was clear he has retained his passion for the game. He spoke to Glenn Moore

SOME players wave to relatives in the crowd, some kick a ball into the net. Emmanuel Petit's pre-match ritual is different. Amid the roar of the crowd at Old Trafford this morning he will stand alone for a few moments and enter a private world. He may pause to cast a few blades of grass into the wind before softly reciting a few words. Then he will jain his Arsenal team-mates and prepare to play Manchester United

The dedication is a poignant memorial to his brother, Oliver, who died at the age of 21 while playing football almost a decade ago. Petit was then a gifted 18-year-old playing for Monaco and already on the verge of international selection. It was a shattering blow to a teenager obsessed with football and be spent years coming to terms with the sport which offered him so much but had taken away so much more.

"When I was young I loved foothall," he said when we met this week, "I really loved it. It was my whole life. When my brother died my mind changed about football. It was not so important. I had wanted to be a professional footballer for me, now l am a footballer for him." At the time he considered giving up but felt that would not be what his brother would have wished. Now he said be feels his brother, who died from a blood clot on the hrain, is watching him when he plays and he draws faith from that belief.

The trauma was made worse for Petit by his living in Monaco while his family were the length of France away in Dieppe. Then, a year later, his father suffered a heart attack while training with his football team. He was rushed to hospital and survived but Petit recalled "for it to again be on a football pitch, it was unbelievable". Petit, himself, underwent many tests to check his health.

We are sitting in the St Albans bolel Arsenal use as a training base and where Petit himself lived for two months before setting up home near Barnet. In the flesh the Arsenal midfielder appears smaller, younger and much friendlier than the unsmiling and intimidating figure he cuts on the pitch. The ponytail is down and his hair hangs loose.

Although an interpreter is with us, Petit uses him just to check the occasional word or phrase. He even does crosswords in English, his desire to absorb the language hastened by his initial sense of isolation after his £3.5m move and Arsène Wenger's habit of speaking English in training.

Wenger was Petit's coach at Monaco and his presence at Highbury obviously encouraged Petit to choose them ahead of other suitors



Thinking footballer's mentor: I was very impressed by what he did, Emmanuel Petit says of his compatriot Eric Cantona. When I was in the French team we would always Photograph: Peter lay sit together, Laurent Blanc, Eric and me. Laurent would say to Eric: "There is your spiritual son"

conteoders with Petit memorably Highbury during negotiations.

this summer. Tottenham were also the morning?" - be likes it here. "I occided a change after 14 years at borrowing a taxi fare from Alan Sug- Monaco. I wanted to know another ar to get from White Hart Lane to country. I always liked the English approach to the game - it is still a to beat them away from bome. So football against us because we would ford before - despite growing up to

football there so frustrating.

"In England you can win or lose anywhere. In France there are about seven hig teams and it is very hard Apart from the weather and the game, oot like Italy and France even if we lose to Manchester Unit- outplay them. But Manchester Unit- a Channel port he had only been to morning is likely to be no different.

Rangers, Valencia and Internazionale kick-off times - "what next? Five in where there is so much pressure. The ed it will not be all over, United can ed should be good opponents be-

still lose games to anyone. more football here, some teams just want to kick it, they don't want to play

cause they always want to play. This "Sometimes I would like to play is new and good for English football and for the England team."

Petit has never been to Old Traf-

England once as a schoolboy - but he is a friend of the local hero. His knowing smile confirms that I am not the first English journalist to ask about Eric Cantona hut he is still happy to record his admiration.

I was very impressed by what he did [in retiring and other matters]. It is rare to meet a player who does exactly what be wants to do, on and off the pitch. He is always thinking. Maybe he is crazy but he knows what he does when he says, 'I for you,' or when he takes bis shirt off [as when he flung his Marseilles shirt to the ground wheo sent off in a charity match]. Some players, they go to Japan or America for the money, he say, 'I stop' - and be does.

When I was in the French team as a young player we would always sit together, Laurent Blanc, Eric and me. Laurent would say to Eric, 'There is your spiritual son'. He did influence me in small ways but no one can be just like him.

Petit, too, is a man of principle. He caused outrage in France when, while still going through the turmoil of Oliver's death he accused Marseilles of being corrupt - an accusation later confirmed. He appears, again, to have falleo out of favour with Aimé Jacquet, the French manager, though he was reticent about discussing their relationship and still hopes for a recall in time for the World Cup. However, his belief that the French team should "put on a show, a spectacle, a celebration of football and life with mistakes and goals, as in the 3-3 draw with Norway, rather than boring football like chess", is unlikely to meet Jacquet's approval.

He feels his best opportunity of getting in the French team is as a leftsided defensive player and his best position is central defence. Wenger, however, prefers him in midfield. When be plays there he links in well with the defence, he understands their needs," Wenger said. "He may appear similar to Patrick Vieira but he is more of an interceptor, Vieira is a tackler. Petit finds forwards with long passes whereas Vieira runs with the ball more." Petit has yet to score in 32 matches but Wenger added: "He has improved a lot offensively and we will get goals from him.".

Today's match is the sort of occasion Petit came to England for. "At Monaco," he said, recalling the paltry crowds, "you had to motivate yourself. You had to be strong mentally." He went there at 14 io the belief that he needed to be away from his family to make it as a professional player. "It was strange, going from the poor north to Monaco with all the yachts. You might get recognized but you were only a footballer, not a golfer or tennis player," he added with a rude and dismissive gesture. "Football was regarded as the poor man's game."

Petit is a complex figure, secular but with an interest in Buddhism and. like Cantona, confident but introspective. Unpsually for a footballer he asked: "What do people think of me?" and he said: "I am still discovering who I am, for a person it is the most important thing to discover about themselves."

In these moments, and when he talks of his first months here, there is a vulnerability which may stem from having to grow up too fast as a teenager. Few opponents, or referees, see this on the pitch however and this

In pursuit of a long-lasting board game

CONSIDERING that the Table Soccer in which you had scemingly endless list of mer- to twist knobs at the side of the chandise spawned by the vast industry we used to know as football now includes everything from duvet covers to doormats and dairy products (you can even buy Norwich City milk now, for heaven's sake), it is surprising that we have yet to see a game that has stood the test of time.

The exception, of course, is Subbuteo which, like Jimmy Hill, seems in have been around for ever, whether you like it or not. Subbuteo actually made its debut as far back as they apparently recreate a hu-1947 when it was on an old Army blanket using a piece of chaik. In those days the Fifa directives were simpler - the rules addressed nothing more than the assembly of the paper nets and wire-framed goals but Subbuteo has managed to keep abreast of the changes in the game; "Continental style" keepers appeared in 1969, while Subbuteo's first all-seater stadium was included in the 1976 World Cup edition, 14 years ahead of the real thing.

Over the years there have been endless variations on Subbuteo's theme, but frankly, none have been a patch on the original. There was Striker, yourself PC versions have had which involved pressing a play-

goalmouth to spin little plastic players around on a hard green indented surface (not dissimilar to the pitch in Monaco).

There was also the quaintly simplistic blow football (you oever knew you could have so much fun with a straw and ping-pong ball) and the classic table football, once beloved of youth clubs and pubs, but like Chris Waddle you see them only rarely these days (although in certain parts of Italy man version of the game using people hanging on to bers).

There have been endless football card games, too, and more recently a board game called The Manager which rather short shelf life (unlike its creator, Terry Venables, who has enjoyed a long shelf life without being particularly successful).

Of course, part of the problem with football games is that it's almost impossible to do justice to real action; it's far more fulfilling to throw down a couple of jumpers in the back gardeo and have a kickabout a pretty good stab at it, but even they, addictive though they kick, and Bobby Charlton's are con't beat the real thing.



ON THE NOT SO TRIVIAL SEARCH FOR A TABLE-TOP WINNER

However, like any current football spin-off they've still was successful, but had a been a buge commercial success, and if projected sales figures are anything to go by, it looks as if much the same will soon apply to the World Cup edition of Trivial Pursuit, the latest offspring of the original

version of the board game. Vinnie Jones, for one, reckons "it's a classy product". Wimbledon's captain was present at the launch along with George Best, although Melinda Messenger, schednled for top billing, evidently had far less trivial things to do with ber time than turn up at Lof- did once go and watch Hali- it's only a game.

tus Road. Instead we were fax Town. Brian Highley. treated to the Beverley Sisters claims be's tried to "make the (one of whom is the widow of Billy Wright of Wolves and England fame), who admitted that what they knew about football could be written oo the weighty and the rather bathe back of a postage stamp. No wooder they were all clutching copies of the game.

Not that this version of this is no board game Ouestion of Sport, oot with questions like: What was the name What colour are Roberto Baggio's eyes? (green); Which player did Vinnie Jones claim be'd beat by tying his dreadlocks in the corner flag?

(Rund Gullit).

Jones, in fact, is featured in at least six of the questions, which fall into six categories: the world of football, players and personalities, history of the game, road to the Cop, off the pitch and free-kick. He admits that the game is a favourite of the Wimbledon players on away trips, and that "Chris Perry always wins, al-

though Joe [Kinnear] gets all the old questions right". Strangely, the man who spent 12 months devising the

game lively and appealing to everyone, not just hardcore football fans", and it certainly treads a nice line between

The PR blurb, in fact, describes it as "the ultimate non-anorak football product Trivial Pursuit calls for an which will provide a timely extensive football knowledge; and entertaining foil to the serious business of France 98 and unite lovers and loathers of the game in happy conof Bobby Moore's cat? (Pele); templation of the idiosyncrasies of the national sport". Thankfully, the questions are oot so wordy and, since they do not all focus on the World Cup, the game won't become absolete as soon as the final whistle blows in the Stade de France on 12 July. Consequently it could well enjoy a longevity in the marketplace of Peter Shilton-like propor-

Its nearest competitor is bound to be the World Cup version of Monopoly, in which Brazil are Mavfair, while poor old Scotland have drawn the short straw and are the Old Kent Road, which was always downmarket, cheap and distinctly undesirquestions has absolutely no in- able. Still, as they say in real terest in football, although be football, at the and of the day

We're (not) all going to Wembley

Five years ago the Arsenal fans were singing this song every week. Led by the seemingly infallible George Graham, the Gunners were closing in on two Wembley finals and an unprecedented domestic cup double. They damn well did it too.

Arsenal played four times at Wembley in the 1992-3 season, beating Spurs in the FA Cup semi-final and Sheffield Wednesday in both the FA and Coca-Cola Cup finals, the former in a replay. For a lad who had stared disbelievingly at the telly as the Gunners pulled off a miraculous 3-2 win over Manchester United in the FA Cup final of 1979, being present at Wembley to see the Gunners lift the trophy in '93 was a dream fulfilled. Now comes the Wembley

nightmare: Arsenal Football Club plan to leave Highbury and make Wembley their new home. Unthinkable? To the fans, perhaps, but not, apparently, to the club's directors, who are attempting to buy the national stadium.

Arsenal's need for a stadium with a minimum capacity of 50,000 has been well documented, but until this week the

"We're on the march, with lieved that the club would still mourning the loss of the Georgie's army. We're all going eventually resolve its differ-to Wem-ber-lee!" ences with Islington Borough ences with Islington Borough Council and find a way to redevelop Highbury.

On Thursday, Arsenal confirmed that a bid for Wembley Stadium had been made. It is the worst news that Arsenal fans have beard since George Graham was sacked in February 1995.

The club insist that they wish to remain at Highbury. Fans are left wondering why plans to rebuild Highbury

FAN'S EYE

VIEW NO 245 HIGHBURY

ELLIOTT have been blocked, and whether relocating to Wernbley is really the best option open to the club.

Highbury has been Arsenal's home since 1913. There is so much history about the place; the elegant East and ings; the famous marble halls; Arsenal's most devoted fans. the bust of the great Herbert Chapman. This grand old stadium is a big part of what

makes Arsenal a great club. Football fans love tradimajority of supporters be- tion. Many Arsenal fans are Home Of Football.

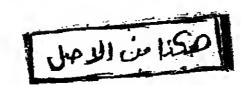
old North Bank terrace, impressive as the new North Bank Stand is. To leave Highbury altogether would break many fans' hearts.

· Wembley is the most famous football stadium in Britain, but would it ever feel like Arsenal's home, or would Arsenal fans feel the same disillusionment as the Wimbledoo fans forced to watch their team's "bome" fixtures as tenants at Selhurst Park?

The atmosphere at a Wembley cup final is something to savour, and it is conceivable that Arsenal could fill the stadium for Premiership games against the likes of Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea. However, for a midweek game against Snuthampton, Wembley would be half full at best and, as certain England friendlies have proven, a half-empty Wembley is a soulless place.

Arsenal fans want their dub to compete with Europe's best. But leaving Highbury for Wembley will not only leave Islington poorer both culturally and economically; it West Stands, both listed build- will also test the loyalty of the

> Ultimately, it is not the prospect of a move to Wembley that fills the supporters with dread. It is losing Highbury, a place that Assenal fans call The



Ward teaches Barnsley the one-nil knack

THERE appeared to be one six as opposed to the long gaps certainty in the fickle game of of the FA Cup. They were chance that is the Premiership. clubs will rise or fall but Barnsley were beyond redemption. They would go back to the First have added charm and hope Division as surely as Paul Gascoigne would make headlines.

So much for the consensus. Barnsley might still go down, but they are far from the hap- from the safety positions with less coconuts being shied at by a game in hand. everyone else. If they beat they could even move out of the relegation places to the extreme embarrassment of the socalled "big" clubs of Tottenham Hotspur and Everton. It is a price the nation could bear.

Barnsley have become the going out on a twice weekly ba- with four goals in 1-0 victories

billed as such when the season began and wios over Liverpool and Manchester United since and to the saga. They are undefeated at Oakwell since November and are now third from bottom, two points away

"We ve achieved a knack of Southampton at home today hanging on to one-goal leads," Ashley Ward, a £1.5m transfer from Derby this season, said. "That's been the secret. We're never going to bury teams, it was always a case of trying to nick earnes 1-0 or 2-1.*

Ward has been true to that country's darlings, giant killers strategy, securing 12 points The Premierships so-called fall guys have developed a strategy for survival, says Guy Hodgson, while Nick Harris (below) analyses the weekend match by match

a psychological advantage over for a while." others in the intensive scare are only just realising they have to battle to survive, while we've been ready for that seeit's a bit of a shock.

goals against column and think Rovers. we've been leaking them all season, but it's a while since we got a battering. We're a lot tighter at the back now and

and he believes Barnsley have can stay up. That's been there what was the flintiest of de- Ferdinand two weeks away from

ward. "We're at the stage that assumption most of the where teams feel the nerves season, but their dash for comand that could work in our fort at the turn of the year has favour," he said. "Some teams been arrested by a run of four are making isolated mistakes," draws and two defeats in their last six matches. They have not been helped by the suspension nario since August. To others of their attacking outlet, Duncan Ferguson, who completes "People will look at our his ban today against Blackburn

Not that the visitors to Goodison are exactly brimming with confidence after shipping 13 goals in their last there's a genuine belief that we four Premiership matches. For thing in his contract. With Les reconcile the team who are second-placed Arsenal.

feoces, this has come as a recovering from a knee injury Everton have been making shock as their manager, Roy Hodgson, concedes. "I don't think we're defending badly corporately, but individuals he said. "Every team suffers slumps, but it's important we

> Which is something that will have crossed the minds of the Tottenham players, if they can spare the time from squabbling with the management. Jürgen in my life now." Klinsmann, the rebel with a .

get out of it quickly."

and Chris Armstrong still being nursed back, it is logical that the German will be wondering whether David Ginola is in the right position from a place on

Anxiety has stalked Spurs all season. "I wake up every morning and go training," Ramon Vega, their central defender, said, "just thinking about relegation. It's the biggest thing

the field rather than the bench.

Liverpool, meanwhile, have clause, will play against Liver- an obsessive need to find their pool, but not because of any-true personality. It is hard to

for the last three years as both clubs have regularly filled

their grounds.
While Sunderland and Middlesbrough are both in the

Premiership, all three teams figure in the top 10 average

respectively this season and their aggregate attendances are just 43,275 and 41,544.

Manchester United (55,151) are the only club with an

First Division and Newcastle lie only 14th in the

challenging for a Champions' League place with the ooe who have lost to Aston Villa, Southampton and Middlesbrough in recent weeks. However, Roy Evans players' give the impression they can beat Juventus one week and lose to Doncaster the next. White Hart Lane will hope it is one their bad days.

Liverpool and Blackburn will have a keen interest in what happens at Old Trafford, but then so will Cheisea who travel to West Ham with second place in their sights even if Manchester United's coat-tails are too far in the distance. Wednesday's 6-2 win against Crystal Palace elevated them to fourth, only three points behind

They have three routes to qualify for Europe, which is two more than Derby and Leeds who are on the fringes of the Uefa Cup places and will have a better idea who will finish higher after they meet at Pride Park.

They are sixth and seventh respectively with the same number of points and there was the same hair's breadth between when they met at Elland Road earlier in the season. Then Leeds were 3-0 down after 20 minutes before staging the comeback of the seasoo to

Given the way Leeds played against Blackburn on Wednesday - awful to awesome with half-time as the junction - a similar result is conceivable.



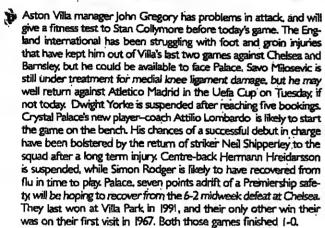
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Aston Villa v C Palace





Barnsley v Southampton

Barnsley left wing-back Darren Barnard could be fit today, three days after it was thought he may have broken his leg. Barnard only sustained a calfinjury in the 1-0 win at Aston Villa, and manager Danny Wilson says his defender now has "a good chance of making it". Although midfielder Jovo Bosancic returns from a two-match ban, Wilson is without injured quartet John Hendrie (ankle), Ales Krizan (knee), Arjan de Zeeuw (groin) and Peter Markstedt (neck). Barnsley have won three of their last four Premiership games and could move out of the relegation zone with a win today.

Southampton will be without Carlton Palmer because of a one-match ban. Palmer, who has been very influential for the Saints since his Elm move from Leeds earlier in the season, picked up the suspension against his former club two weeks ago. Kevin Richardson is likely to replace Palmer but leading scorer Kevin Davies and midfielder David Hughes will be out for the next month with long-term ankle and rib injuries respectively. The Saints have won four of their last five Premiership games, including away at Elland Road and Anfield.



The Paris of the Paris (CA)

Bolton v Sheffield Wed

Bolton midfielder Jamie Pollock is suffering from flu and will not be available for selection today. The news follows a week of alleged unrest between the player and the manager Colin Todd which resulted in Pollock asking for a transfer. Todd also has selection problems over Scott Sellars (leg), who sat out last week's 2-1 defeat at Liverpool with the injury, which came on the back of a two-match ban. Mark Fish is likely to get his first start since mid-January. Fish missed the whole of February on international duty with South Africa and was kept on the bench last weekend. Bolton last won on I December. Goce Sedloski is included in the Sheffield Wednesday squad today. for the first time since his £1.75m move from Hajduk Split. The Macedonian international defender received clearance to play this week. Petter Rudi (hamstring) and Mark Pembridge (stomach) have both shrugged off minor knocks but midfielder Graham Hyde is suspended. Following last week's 2-0 win over Manchester United, Wednesday manager Ron Atkinson believes his side need nine points from their nine remaining garnes to guarantee Premiership safety.



Everton v Blackburn

John Spencer, the Scottish striker signed on loan from Queen's Park Rangers this week, will make his Everton debut today. Fellow Scot Duncan Ferguson will miss the match, serving the last game of his three-match ban, while Gareth Farrelly is also suspended. Defender Craig Short and midfielder Gavin McCann are available again after injury. Everton have not won in their last five Premiership matches and go into today's game just two points above the relegation zone, having played one more game than the bottom three.

England goalkeeper Tim Flowers is likely to return for Blackburn after a shoulder strain. Flowers has missed three matches but safely negotiated a fitness check and will replace Alan Fettis. There is a doubt over England winger Jason Wilcox, who suffered a stomach strain during the 4-0 defeat at Leeds on Wednesday, but he still has a chance of being fit to start. Blackburn could also recall Billy McKinlay and have midfielder Lars Bohinen and defender Tore Pedersen available. French full back Patrick Valery is out with a virus, while forward Kevin Gallacher serves the final game of a three-match ban.



Manchester Utd v Arsenal Leading scorer

Alex Ferguson has injury problems for this morning's match. England midfielder Nicky Butt is almost certain to be missing with a calf strain and with Gary Pallister and Ryan Giggs still on the injured list, Ferguson won't name his side until the last minute. Phil Neville should be fit after missing the midweek I-I draw against West Ham with a slight harnstring injury and Ronny Johnsen, also missing on fednesday after suffering from concussion during the 2-0 defeat Sheffield Wednesday last week, should be added to the squad. enal's goalkeeper Alex Manninger (thigh and knee) and full-back el Winterburn (foot) have both been passed fit. Arsene Wenger one main selection decision to make, between 18-year-old Nico-Pipelka and fellow striker Christopher Wreh. Wreh scored the Adgal in the 1-0 midweek win over Wimbledon, which put Arbe points behind today's opponents with three games in hand. aman, Ian Wright and Steve Bould are all nearly fit again. not in today's squad of 18, but all three should be availiesday's FA Cup quarter-final replay against West Ham.



Sunderland inspire North-east boom

The North-east has always been one of English football's strongholds and the region's leading three clubs are enjoying bigger attendances this season than for many years. are attracting almost twice as many fans as they did six years ago, when all three clubs were in the old Second Division. Their aggregate average attendance this season is nearly 100,000,

compared with just over 52,000 in the 1991-92 campaign. The big difference this season compared with a year ago is at Sunderland, whose average First Division gate at their new Stadium of Light is nearly 33,000, compared with a Premiership average at Roker Park a year ago of less than

Newcastle and Middlesbrough have remained at the same level

average above 50,000, while Liverpool (40,006) have the only other average gate above 40,000. Apart from Sunderland and Middlesbrough, two other Nationwide League clubs, Manchester City and Wolves, figure in the Sunderland's average looks likely to improve in the closing weeks of the season as they continue their promotion push. Two home games have already attracted 40,000-plus gates and this week more than 37,000 saw the 1-1 draw against Birmingham, However, business is not booming everywhere in the North-east. The area's two other League clubs, Darlington and Hartiepool, have played 18 and 19 home matches

tendances this season.

Average gates of the North-east's big three

1991-92	21,148	18,390	14,709	52,247
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1993-94	33,679	16,934	10,400	61,013
		APPROX.		68841
1995-96	36,507	17,482	29,283	83,272
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1997-98*	36,679	32,782	29,966	99,427

England's 20 best supported clubs

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Manchester United	55,151	Derby	28,802
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Arsenal Arsenal	38,029	Manchester City	27,714
	96,679	Interlier	27 326
Aston Villa	35,712	West Harp	24,383
Time And the	35,038	Blackberry	24,480
Leeds	33,897	Botton	24,107
Cheleta	33 458	Wolves	23,510
Sunderland	32,782	Crystal Palace	22,500
Middlesbrough	29.966	Lacaster	20,457
			Comment of the Comment

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

Allan Johnston celebrates a Sunderland goal against Huddersfield. The

Wearside club are also celebrating an Improvement of more then 50

per cent in their gates this season

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FAIR PLAY LEAGUE
Reteros German Pad Yelon

Newcastle v Coventry



Steve Watson is Newcastle's only injury worry for today. Greek international defender Nikos Dabizas is in line to at least be on the bench, while Alessandro Pistone could be given a recall, after missing the last two matches through suspension. Having beaten Barnsley 3-1 in last weekend's FA Cup quarter-final, Newcastle are in line to meet today's opponents in the semi-final if Coventry overcome Sheffield United in their replay. The Magpies have won only one of their last five Premiership games, and start the day six points clear of the relegation zone with a game in hand. Coventry defender Paul Williams stands by for his first senior football since a hemia operation two months ago and is expected to be on the substitutes' bench. Marcus Hall is likely to recover from a calf strain, while veteran goalkeeper Steve Ogrizovic plays his 496th League game for the club as City try to extend their run to 10 matches unbeaten, John Salako is out with an injured back, while long-term absentees Liam Daish and Gary McAllister

have both had knee surgery this week.

Tottenham v Liverpool



Last season: 0-2
New signing Moussa Saib has joined Tottenham's infamous injury list already and will not play today. Manager Christian Gross intended to give the £23m Algerian midfielder his first Spurs start after two brief substitute appearances but he injured his back in a midweek reserves match. Chris Armstrong returns to partner Jürgen Klinsmann in attack. Goalkeeper lan Walker and defender John Scales, who have both been out long term, are nearly fit but will not play today. Les Ferdinand is still more than a week away from full re-

covery after a knee ligament injury. Phil Babb stands by to make his Liverpool comeback at White Hart Lane after missing five games with a knee injury. The Republic of . Ireland defender has been badly missed in the Anfield side's defence. and the dub have won only one game, last week's 2-1 win over Bolton, in his absence. German striker Kartheinz Riedle will not play due to a thigh injury, while Mark Kennedy - back from a loan spell at QPR - has not recovered from a finger operation earlier in the



West Ham v Chelsea

West Ham captain Steve Lomas will miss today's derby with Chelsea with a thigh problem. The Northern Ireland midfielder joins defender David Unsworth, striker Paul Kitson, right-back: Tim Breacker and goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko on the Hammers' casualty list. Midfielder John Monour and striker John Hartson are suspended, so Ian Bishop is favoured to come Into the midfield. West Ham have drawn their last five games. They have one of the best home records in the Premiership, having lost just once this season in the League. Chelsea's player-manager Gianluca Vialli is likely to rest himself for the trip across London. The Italian scored twice in Wednesday's 6-2 win over Crystal Palace, a feat matched by Tore Andre Flo when he came off the bench, and the Norwegian is likely to be rewarded with a start at Upton Park. Roberto Di Matteo, rested on Wednesday replaces the suspended Dennis Wise, while Michael Duberry is ready to return, possibly in place of Steve Clarke. Danny Granville continues to deputise for Graeme Le Saux and Dmitri Kharin will



Wimbledon v Leicester



Wimbledon's captain Vinnie Jones is doubtful for today after picking up a leg injury in the 1-0 defeat against Arsenal in midweel: England Under-21 defender Ben Thatcher pulled a hamstring in the same game and, like Jones, will have a late fitness test. Midfielder Cen Hughes, who has had hamstring trouble for some time, and vice-captain Robbie Earle could both return after long absences through injury. The Dons may play with three strikers, with Jason Euell, Carl Leaburn and Marcus Gayle the most likely combination to start up front. Wirnbledon are just four points above the relegation zone but have games in hand on all the sides below them.

Leicester manager Martin O'Neill has recalled on loan Steve Claridge from Portsmouth and Julian Watts from Huddersfield to ease his selection problems, The Foxes are without Matt Elliott and Muzzy izzet, both starting suspensions, while Ian Marshall's planned comeback may be delayed. O'Neill is also waiting on the fitness of Tony Cottee, Garry Parker, Spencer Prior and Pontus Kamark. Leicester have won only once away against Wimbledon, last March, 3-1.

Derby County v Leeds



Jim Smith is most likely to name an unchanged side for tomorrow's home game against Leeds. Derby gave one of their best performances of the season when they beat Sheffield Wednesday 3-0 two weeks ago to stay on course for a top-six finish and will hope to maintain that form today. Striker Dean Sturridge, who missed that game following a car crash, starts a two-match ban so Jamaican international Deon Burton will again partner Paulo Wanchope in attack. Both sides will be especially keen for a win today to maintain their European hopes and take a three-point advantage over

Leeds' George Graham is likely to name an unchanged side for the first time since the end of November for the game. Not since successive wins over West Harn and Barnsley on November 22 and 29 has Graham had the luxury of being able to keep faith with a settled team. However, with striker Rod Wallace and midfielder Bruno Ribeiro both completing two-match bans, Graham seems certain to pick the same side which beat Blackburn 4-0 on Wednesday.





Saturday 14 March 1998

Fifth Test: Thorpe joins Middlesex batsman as England centurion as defiant sixth-wicket partnership keeps toiling West Indies at bay

Ramprakash's joy at first Test century

Cricket By Derek Pringle

in Bridgetown

England 376-6

IT IS NOT often that a major innings serves both England's long and short-term hopes, but Mark Ramprakash's maiden Test century here yesterday would have come closer than most to achieving it. Walking to the crease when his team were 53 for 4. Ramprakash, aided by Graham Thorpe's hundred at the other end, saw England into competitive territory, hreaking the highest-ever sixth wicket partnership for England against the West Indies set on this

ground in 1974. For onlookers, this was Test cricket from the golden eras when hatsmen reigned supreme on featherbed pitches and scores over 400 were the only currency worth dealing in. In the process England's chances of levelling the series were trans-

West Indies won toss

A J. Stewart e D. Wilsons (23 min, 12 balls, 2 foto) A J. Stewart e D. Wilsons (23 min, 12 balls, 2 fotos) M. A. Butchor e Hooper b A. (83 min, 52 balls, 1 fotos) Hussan c Lara b McLean 7 min, 17 balls, 1 fotos) Thorpe c Lara b Hooper min, 268 balls, 8 fotos) Impralación not out Issal c Lara

Bridgetown scoreboard

it was joy unconfined, the personal epiphany coming at gates. 11.40am, when after slow progress, he struck Nixon McLean for a glorious four through extra cover off the back foot. The scorers indicated it had taken him a mind sapping 379 minutes. In truth it had taken him 38 innings and innumerable sleepless nights to finally turn his boyhood dreams

with reality.

The blooding of Ramprakash has been a long and tortuous journey, and many less passionate men would have long thrown in the towel. Interestingly, anthropologists might observe that it is a route that appears to be favoured exclusively by Middlesex captains, and Ramprakash's predecessor, Mike Gatting, who ended with a decent enough Test record, took 58 innings to reach the same milestone.

Mind you, Gatting's fellow selector Graham Gooch only became a truly world-class player after his 36th birthday, an age formed from hopeless to Ramprakash at 28, predates by some eight years, and many

For Ramprakash, though, will be hoping that his knock here will now open the flood-

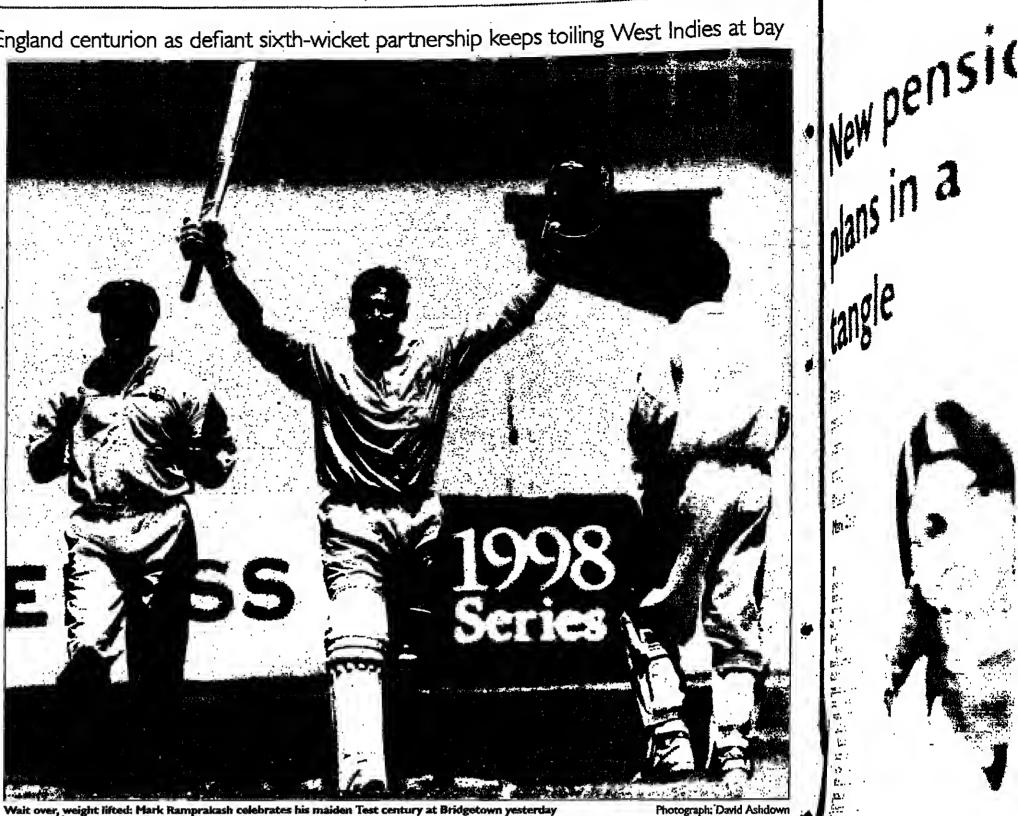
> In many ways, Ramprakash was perhaps fortunate that John Crawley had played in Trinidad. But although the pitch in Georgetown, where he scored a brilliant 63, was poor, the ones in Port of Spain were confidence sapping greentops that have caused bad habits to creep in to the games of both Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain.

> However, what is most surprising about the last three innings the Middlesex captain has played, is the presence he appears to command at the crease. It is a bearing that only the really great batsmen tend to have and one that totally belies his modest record, almost as if, like Rip van Winkle, he had been away for some time only to return fully matured.

> But while some claim to be able to put their finger on the reasons for the transformation others close to him still reckon it is the same old, highly strung Ramps, the intensity better focused oot by any oewly-found maturity, but by the constant kicks in the teeth experienced at Test level.

> Whatever the reasons, Ramprakash was determined to enjoy his long-awaited success. He has spent a long time peering down the dark, narrow lanes. Now was the time for the helicopter view and raising his arms aloft to the cacopbony, he drank in the tumultuous applause, pausing only to shake hands with Brian Lara, the opposing captain, and to accept a hug from Thorpe.

tury has been swallowed up by second fiddle about it, the left- the bowlers, particularly the than honest trundlers. events at the other end, the pre- hander was anything but as vious occasion being when he Ramprakash, hitting just three partnered Hussain during the boundaries in the morning ses-



Wait over, weight lifted: Mark Ramprakash celebrates his maiden Test century at Bridgetown yesterday

latter's brilliant double centu- siou, took time weighing up the roughhouse tactics of their er to wheel away form one end Having batted so well, especialry against Australia at Edgbaston last June.

pe clearly has a growing reputempestuous team-mates past

journey, although painstaking, A player of few frills, Thor- was not without its nervous to line and length instead. But and his slow drip tactics almost moments, as one wild slash while they are still fine bowlers, tation for shepherding over gully off McLean testified, the lack of constant menace pre-

Poor Thorpe. It is the second significant milestones. But if the centuries in the bag, both in- and more recently by the spicy time in a year that his own cen-role implies something of the creased their run-scoring rate as pitches, made them little more quicker ones, became tired and disconsolate. Uoable to resort to the them, it was left to Carl Hoop- he edged the off-spinner to slip.

best route to the peak. His youth, Curtly Ambrose and and wait for the mistakes. Courtney Walsh had to resort Hooper is an underrated bowler paid immediate dividends when Ramprakash skied a big hit After lunch, and with both viously afforded them by youth, just out Roland Holder's reach at mid-wickel

But if the disappointment of With a long hot day in the ficult for the West Indies to swalfield slowly unreeling in front of low, Thorpe made it easier when

ly after suffering back spasms the previous day, it was the kind of nothing dismissal Thorne seems to specialise in against spin. For someone who can look as

4 4 5

solid as Gibraltar against the quick bowlers. Thorpe has a habit of getting out to unthreata oear chance was proving dif- ening deliveries from the slow men and his angled bat guided the ball into Lara's hands.

TODAY 11 PAGES OF SPORT BEGIN ON PAGE 14

6-336 (Thorpe).
To batt A R Caddlock, A R C Fresser, P C R Tufnell.
Progress: First day: 50; 84 min. 20 overs. Lanch: 55-4 (Thorpe 5, Ramprakaeh 2) 26 overs. Thorpe refred that at shuch with bock eyesms end returned at the fall of the 60th wicket 100; R7 min. 413 overs, Test; 49-5 (Ramprakash 45, Thorpe 10; 55 overs. 150; 248 mm, 573 overs. 200; 330 min. 762 overs. New ball taken after 81 overs at 212-5. WEST INDIES: C B Lambert, P A Walface, *B C Lara, S Chanderpaul, C L Hooper, R I C Holder, *10 Williams, I R Bishop, C E L Ambrose, N A M McLeen, C A Walsh. Umphres: C J Machley (SA) and E Nichole (Wil).



ON MONDAY: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING PETR KORDA TALKS TO JOHN ROBERTS

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3558. Saturday 14 March Friday's solution

No source of fresh 10 Musician showing a rare bit of pluck in his time?

Constituent of course requires Tory to accept de- 4 People's event (4) 13 Smart footwork by the Brazilians (5) Section of choir tried

backing small group (4) 17 Pull power nearly restored (7) 18 Dignity shown by model RA seduced (7) 19 Tablet – take one when you have a turn outside

22. Reference book omitting a line in the speech (7) Penetrated by Odysseus' first attempt? It was (4) security guards (5) Record is held by plain-

clothes pouceman;
29 Little change for Lisbon
business filing short final
23 Copy one article found in
middle of Germany (7) clothes policeman (4) VAT return (7) Attack on music piracy? (3-4) hot spots (4)
31 Costs of getting ready to 28 It's in the Square, actually

DOWN 2 Old craft for centuries associated with source of

wisdom (7) Bit of ironmongery visible through chipped varnish? (4) Calculator they use for

working out spans (7) Black horse overtaking taxi (7) Retreat that's by no means satisfactory (4) Went inside camouflaged tree-den (7)

Dishonesty in piano exercises umatural? (5,8)
Funny man in comic duo's impossible to contact (13) 15 Cloth employed in the army (5) Skill required to climb on top of church? Not very

inuch (5) Late riser? (7) Heavenly apparition turning women on? (3,4) Decline to accept Norwe gian, say, is cause of ill-feeling (7)

Army corps has to cover

The first five correct so uny receive narramented copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. An swers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Creasword, E O. Box 4013, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London Eld-Sill, Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: C Morcher, Warlingham; P Robinston, Brackmell; N Flatman, Ipswich; I Hobell Manual Company of the Canada Canada Company of the Canada Company of the Canada
CPublished by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albana Road, Watford Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01968 840370.

Ferguson expecting his big names to rise to big game

Football

By Guy Hodgson

FIVE weeks ago Alex Ferguson was asked whether he would prefer a draw when Arsenal met Chelsea at Highbury the fol-lowing day. "No, I'd like an Ar-senal win," he replied, leaving no doubts as to where he anticipated the greater challenge to come from.

The Manchester United manager was granted his wish hut, as the landscape at the top of the Premiership has changed, so has the threat and he might regret it now. Arsenal beat Chelsea on 8 February and launched a charge which has taken them to within nine points of the champions with three games in hand.

A win at Old Trafford today and the one-horse title race that bookies had lost interest in will suddenly contain a stable of contenders. But if United win every one else will look to second place as the limit of their ambition and turf accountant's books shut all over Britain. Today's match is that important.

Ferguson, who is known to like a bet, concurs with that assessment and will be hoping his team revert to one character trait rather than indulge their inclination to, in his own words, "make things hard for ourselves".

"I think we're recognised as big game players and I confidently expect my team to be up for this one," he said yesterday. "They always are on these occasions. This is a big, big game, and if we win it I think it will just about clinch the title for us. Race for the Premiership

P WDLF A WDLF A PtsGD Man Utd ..30 11 2 1 35 6 7 4 5 23 16 60+36 Arsenal....27 10 2 2 29 9 4 7 2 17 17 51 +20

10 Apr Liverpool (H) UNITED 16 Apr Newcastle (+1) 27 Apr C Palace (A) 2 May Leeds (H)

10 May Barnsley (A)

Remaining fixtures

4 Apr Liverpool (A) ARSENAL II Apr Newcastle (I-f) 13 Apr Backburn (A) 29 Apr Derby (H) 18 Apr Wimbledon (H) 2 May Everton (H) 25 Apr Bansley (A) 10 May A Villa (A)

We've only seven matches to go after this one and games are running out for our rivals. Of course. if Arsenal get a result it'll mean we're in for a cliff hanger."

"In fairness to us, we've performed in all the big games this season. We won at Liverpool, Chelsea and Newcastle and beat Biackburn at Old Trafford and even though we lost at Highbury in November we were denied a blatant penalty that day."

The match at Highbury has little hearing on today's match in the same way that the nuances of play had scant relevence to the changing scoreline in November. United began

ham directing the traffic, and yet went 2-0 down. In the end Arsenal throughly deserved their 3-2 win, as Ferguson acknowledged, but both teams might have prevailed.

The main lesson learned could be that Arsenal can afford periods and still prosper, as they did against Wimbledon at Selhurst Park on Wednesday. "The way we played there is exactly what we'll need at Old Trafford," their manager, Arsène Wenger, said. "a mixture of high skill and typical Arsenal character."

Wenger has also said that a draw might prove to be a good magnificently, Teddy Shering- result so the Gunners are un-

Italian first language at Palace

The new player-coach at Crystal Palace yesterday gave his first press conference - entirely in Italian. However, reports that the Premiership strugglers are now a nursery club for Juventus were said to be greatly exaggerated.

Attilio Lombardo has taken over team affairs, with the manager, Steve Coppell, stepping aside to become director of football development. Lombardo will be assisted by his Italian speaking team-mate, the former Swedish international Tomas Brolin.

likely to be going out with all barrels hlazing, and any preference for the counter-attack will be aided by the absence of Nicky Butt, who tends to tidy things up in midfield.

The most influential absence, greater even than Ian Wright's, could prove to be Ryan Giggs. Without the Welsh winger opponents have been able to channel United towards the middle where big centre-backs have picked off long balls to Teddy Sheringham and Andy Cole.

David Beckham might be the hest crosser in the Premiership but he rarely gets outside his full-back on the right flank and with no real threat on the flanks there has been a predictability about their play in recent times. In their last eight games they to surrender the midfield for long have scored only seven times and gained only 11 points.

Arsenal have been predictable, too, but only in the number of games they have been winning recently.

"We have found our consistency again now and the spirit and quality in the side is as strong as ever," Wenger said. "We have had very many problems with injuries and suspensions but we have shown we can overcome them. For me, even quality is not enough unless you have spirit \$ And, above all, consistency is the 3 main thing at the top level.

There is a bit more pressuon United, but not ecough y-Two or three weeks ago the tle was just a dream for us people laughed when I se could do it."

No one will be lang they win at Old Traffor Least of all Ferguson.

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

YOURMONEY

Personal finance and property Saturday 14 March 1998 New pension plans in a tangle Plans to simplify pensions by using kitemarks could be brought down by Brussels. By Mark Colgate A key reform, under which

The Government's drive to give low-cost private pensions to more than 8 million workers who only have state pensions is in jeopardy because of European laws

the Government has planned to slash the cost of regulation by putting "kitemarks" on cheap pensions, would put an entire swathe of pensioo providers outside the law.

Life insurers, which provide nearly a third of all private pensions to date, this week warned they could oot sell "stakeholder pensions", a central plank of the Government's welfare reforms. 'if they were kitemarked.

The European Union's Third Life directive" makes it illegal for insurance companies to offer products that are preapproved by the Government, or kitemarked, because it would supposedly kill off competition.

19 TX 124

saure Burer parel

3 game

According to the insurers, the law could also block the Government from cutting the cost of regulating Individual Savings Accounts by using a kitemark.

This means a widely touted method of reducing the cost of loog-term savings products, backed by the Association of British Insurers and investment houses such as M&G, is in effect no longer an option for the Government.

As the Government looks to expand the availability of investment products to the less well paid, ooe of its primary concerns has been to keep

Kitemarking would be one means of doing so because it cut out large costs to the consumer. The idea was that the Government would authorise certain products as approved for sale to anyone. This would eliminate

much of the cost of sales regu-

lation as well as reducing the

cost of financial advice. In its submission to the Government oo pensions reform. Standard Life says the overall costs of creating, selling and advising on a pensioo worked out at 18 per cent of all the mooey put in. Of this, 8.5 per cent con-

sisted of the cost of advice, be it through a financial adviser ordirect sales force. Ironically, the relevant ele-

ments in Europe's Third Life directive, which make it illegal for insurance products to be kitemarked, were introduced by the British in an attempt to open up the German market to external competition.

But not all sellers of pensions and investment products will be affected. Unit trusts are not subject to the European life directives and so could slot in to any kitemarking or preapproval regime for either ISAs or pensions.

Virgin Direct, which has been a keen advocate of kitemarking for stakebolder pensions, has its own pensioo set up through unit trusts, oot through a life company.

Martin Campbell, product development manager at Virgin Direct, says: "We understand there would be a number of problems with the Third Life directive and we hope there is a way round this. We would certainly not want only a small segment of the market to be eligible for kitemarking."

Virgin says it wants a kitemark to be awarded to clear, transparent and flexible products to help attract the 6 million people who currently do not save. Mr Campbell said: "We

would like to have kitemarking extended to all financial products. This would not tell the customers the product is the best for them but it would mean they would avoid all sorts of hidden

The unit trust industry's own trade body has come down against the need for kitemarks.

Philip Warland, director of Autif, said, "The first problem with kitemarking is moral

hazard. People could see it as a recommendation to purchase and if that happens and the product does not work in some sense, the Government will eventually foot the bill.

"Secondly, if some products are kitemarked what does this say about products which are oot, eveo if some of them would be more suitable for some individuals than the kitemarked version? Finally there is a difference between cost and value, oot all low-cost products offer good value.

"I imagine the Government is seeking a product that is accessible, safe, flexible and has clear charging structures and above all is one that is recognised and authorised by a regulator. This is exactly what a unit trust is."

However, the unit trust industry faces its own problem down the line with pensions. There is a move among investment groups to convert unit trusts into a more recent investment vehicle, the opeoeoded investment company or Ocic. As yet there is no legislation in place to allow Ocics to be used as pensions vebicles

The insurance industry is fighting back by trying to find a formula which is as close as possible to kitemarking without baving to resort to pre-approval of life products.

So far, the Third Life directive has not had a hig impact because no one on the Cootineot has complained about pre-approval in the UK.

Paul Grace, who heads the

Superwoman and Virgin

Nicola Horlick, the City fund manager known as superwoman because of her five children and seven-figure earnings has been bet £6,000 that she cannot beat a fund with no manager. Virgin Direct challenged her to beat the FT-SE Actuaries Ali-Share Index, which is tracked by Virgin's fund and charges haif as much as the growth fund she runs for SocGen, her new employer.

Rush for tax freedom

As Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, puts the finishing touches to Tues day's Budget, investors are rushing to seize their taxfree allowances for the 1997/98 tax year. Our writers explore how the rich are getting away from the taxman - and how the average investor can try to do the same.

Pages 6-10

Bargain home loans

The Mortgage Operation, Coventry Building Society and Bradford & Bingley have all launched bargain mortgages this week, with some rates fixed for five years at 6.2 per. Some are even lower. But surely there must be a catch?

Ultra-cheap pension

Association of British Insurers

tax committee, said: "The UK

Government said three years

ago it was looking to remove

pre-certification on qualifying

policies issued by life assurance

companies. While it is still a re-

quirement of UK law it is out-

lawed by European law. If there

were any objections on the

Continent, the UK government

would have to move swiftly."

Eagle Star has slashed pension charges to a new low for customers who save substantial sums before the financial year ends on 5 April. Customers who arrange by telephone to save a lump sum of more than £20,000 will be charged just 0.5 per cent-a year.

Decisions, decisions for Midshires carpetbaggers

City analysts are predicting a bidding war for Birmingham Midshires which could see its I million members offered windfalls approaching £1,000 each - more than 50 per cent in excess of what they expected.

Members of Birmingham Midshires Building Society are already facing the prospect of a £150 boost in their cash windfall after Halifax put in a bid for the society this week. More than 1 millioo members

were expecting an average windfall of about £600 through Royal Bank of Scotland's proposed takeover deal of up to £630m for Midshires. The exclusive deal was set up in August, seven months ago.

But after Halifax barged in unexpectedly with a higher offer of £780m, society members could now be eligible for that little bit of extra help, with an average windfall of about £750.

While the board of Birmingham Midshires is supposed to be bound to its RBS agreement, the City believes it cannot ignore the Halifax offer. If he board talks to Halifax, other bidis are expected to weigh in. John Leonard, a top banking ana-

at Salomon Smith Barney, says: "It be open season for Birmingham nires. I expect Lloyds Bank and wich to be among the bidders." what does this battle for the mean for members? Carpet-Teleppt Midshires - perhaps more

The bidding war for Birmingham Midshires must be good news for members, writes Sophie Tullis

than a quarter of all members - will be laughing all the way to the newly converted bank. More than 300,000 of them rushed to open oew accounts during 1996 to 1997, on speculation that the society would convert. :...

Halifax claims its deal is better, because former members will be able to have access to its products and services as well as getting more money. According to RBS, its deal is not

just about money; it guarantees to run Midshires as an independent operation for three years after the takeover, protecting all the jobs and branches in the UK.

A group of rebel members, called Save our Building Societies, who are campaigning to prevent the Midshires

which converted to banks last year

Northern Rock

£1.344.25

£1,948.00

\$2,260.00

from becoming a bank, think the

takeover tussie could help its campaign. Campaign co-ordinator and member Bob Goodall says: "We wouldn't say the deals were better either way. We will reflect the view of the members who are contacting us. Some will go for the money, but we just want

less attractive."

The campaign now has enough supporters - 122 members - to force

to keep the society going. Whether Royal Bank of Scotland or Halifax takes it over, mortgages will become more expensive and savings

a special meeting to discuss both bids and potentially block either of them. Some doubt remains over whether Midshires' mortgage rates will go up

Average windfall payouts for ex-building societies 2 June 1997 21 April 1997 7 July 1997 1 Oct 1997

if it is taken over. Unlike other mutuals, it has oever tried to compete on

Birmingham Midshires has a standard variable rate for mortgages of 8.7 per cent, which is the same as Halifax's rate.

Royal Bank of Scotland's standard variable rate for mortgages is also 8.7 per cent, but seven out of 10 of its borrowers take out its flexible mortgage, which is more competitive, at 7.95 per ceot

Members who like the smell of money and want to get as hig a windfall as possible will probably want to be able to vote for the Halifax deal. Those who want to make sure

their local Birmingham Midshires branch is still down the road will probably prefer to vote for the Royal Bank of Scotland deal. The Birmingham Midshires' board of directors, which has a duty to look

after the long-term interests of its members, has yet to give a clear steer on which deal it will recommend. Midshires chief executive Mike Jackson says: There are a myriad of things to consider [oo behalf of

members]. The RBS offer is a great deal in the round; oo service, price, looking after our people who are responsible for that service, and making sure there are branches in the

"There are thousands of decisions

and thought processes to go through. We will not be rushed into making a decision oo the hoof."

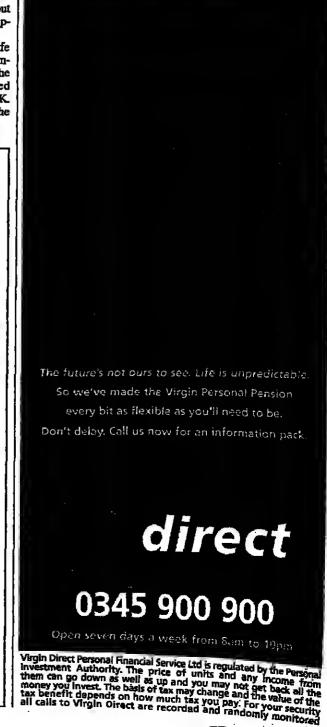
He adds: "Until we have evaluated Halifax's proposal, it is oot possible to say what that deal is like."

Jackson, whose home phone oumber is available to all at the society, plays down any potential rebellion from members. He says he has had eight calls in seven days from members, six of which were about the deal. One wanted to stay mutual, ooe wanted a higher price and the others wanted clarification, although they were happy about the society converting.

Jackson and other directors may be answering calls, but their service does not extend to a written response, according to Sobs, which claims that many members who have written to directors have still to receive replies.

The Midshires board is in a tricky position. It has an obligation to the members to consider the Halifax deal. But it is understood that Midshires is already obliged to put the RBS deal to members, although it does not have to recommend it.

The Birmingham Midshires directors will have to make their views clear in the transfer document which is due to go out oext month. The vote on the RBS offer is scheduled for June. But whatever the directors recommend, it will be the members who decide.



ANDREW VERITY



The nasty legacy of endowments

This week the full cost of the this country's history, the sions, was finally given an ofregulators and Government are now steely in their resolve ment (loadsamoney), rather to clean up the mess: there will be compensation.

Unfortunately, the regulators are much less strident about another nasty legacy of the late 1980s and early 1990s: the mis-selling of endownents. Evidence is piling up that hundreds of thousands of endowment holders have been led to expect much more from the policies than

they will actually get. Actuaries is a powerful body representing the professionals who have the job of sharing out life insurers' investment funds. This week it warned that endowments would pay out much less in the coming years than they have done.

Those who bought an endowment in 1973 are pay off their mortgages. laughing. Payouts this year have reached record levels. A saver who put in £50 a month tween 1982 and 1987, when (totalling £15,000 savings). would see a payout close to £100,000, Before tax, they have got a return worth roughly 16 per cent a year.

The future looks less rosy. Long-term interest rates have hit a nadir of 6 per cent and inflation is widely expected to stay low. Investment returns are expected to be closer to 10 than 16 per cent. That leads actuaries to anticipate a 5 per cent fall in payouts - every year. By 2006, the same 25-year policy is likely to pay just over £50,000.

For some of those with an endowment mortgage, this is unpleasant news.

If you were led to believe higgest financial scandal in your endowment would grow modestly - at, say, 7 per cent mis-selling of personal pen- a year - then there is unlikely to be a problem. But some ficial price tag: £11hn. Both sales people were less scrupulous. Keen to sell an endow-

> than a repayment (no commission), they referred people to the double-digit returns of the 1970s and 1980s. You can pay off the mortgage AND get a lump sum at the end," they typically said, An honest sales person would have added - "but only in the unlikely event that these dazzling returns keep up".

By assuming that policies would grow quickly, financial The Institute & Faculty of advisers could offer cheaper premiums to the unwitting homehuyer. But the cheaper the premiums, the riskier

A substantial minority of endowment holders - possibly over a million people now face the danger that their endowments will not Those most in danger are those who bought policies besales people assumed high investment growth.

Scammy mortgages didn't stop with the 1980s. As our piece on page 5 shows, homebuyers are still being offered apparently cheap mortgages which sometimes have nasty catches in the small

What are the regulators doing about this? Nothing there aren't any regulators. Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, is still umming and ahing about whether the new Financial Services Authority should regulate mortgages. Of course it should, and quickly

Add some PEPs to future plans

THE MAKEOVER Name: Phil and Jane Dunn Occupation: Advertising make-up manager and occupational therapist:

The problem: How to find the most tax-efficient way of making the most of savings and providing for their daughter - who was excluded from receiving windfall shares because of her age.

The advice: By making the most of tax-free allowances in PEPs before they disappear next year, the Dunns can maximise the opportunity to make their money grow.

Having a young daughter just two years and 10 months old has made Phil Dunn and his wife, Jane, think long and hard about their future financial planning.

Phil, 44, who works as an advera year, any tax saving is important.

available to Phil as far as PEPs are con-PEPs, which can provide this potential. cerned. The first is to choose the regular savings route, which would allow as little as £20 per month to be squirrelied away from any surplus monthly income. Alternatively, Phil could will need to act quickly if he wants to Spencer unit trust.



Thinking about long-term investments: Phil and Jane Dunn with daughter Rebecca

tising make-up manager, has so far been wary about putting money into personal equity plans (PEPs) because of the longer-term commitment which this type of investment requires. However, now that Phil enjoys a greater on deposit. Phil has a balance of feeling of job security, he would like to consider this tax-efficient means of saving since clearly, as a borderline higher-rate taxpayer, earning £30,000

The Adviser: Graham Bates, of the leading independent financial advi. a medium-risk strategy, which he says Bates & Partners, based in Leeds. he is happy to do. Since maximising Telephone: 0113 295 5955.

The Advice: There are two channels

make use of his general PEP allowance for the current tax year. which ends on 5 April. PEPs are in their closing stages, with no further investment expected to be allowed after 5 April 1999, so Phil would be wise to make the most of any allowances

before they disappear. One option would be to use some for any purpose. of the capital, which is presently sitting around £6,000 held in a savings account with the Clydesdale Bank earning 5.2 per cent net. Although this is a fair rate for a short-term investment, there is the potential for a significantly higher return proving Phil can invest for five years or longer and is willing to accept long-term capital growth is his primary objective, he would be sensible to consider investment vehicles such as

Marks & Spencer unit trust Jane, who works as a Probation Officer, has already dipped her toe into stock market waters by taking out a choose to invest a lump sum. But he PEP which invests in a Marks and

earmarked this investment for the future - to help towards the cost of her daughter's school fees. One of the benefits which PEPs offer is the flexibility to access the money as required and of course, the proceeds can be used

Tessa roll-over

The Dunns have both made use of Tes-. sas. Phil has an account with the Abbey National to which he has contributed all but the final £600. Jane's first Tessa has already matured and she has opted for a second "roll-over" account, taken out through the Melton Mowhray Building Society.

By choosing to roll-over the £9.000 capital, Jane keeps her money in a taxfree environment for a further five years, even though new Tessa investments will no longer he allowed following the introduction of the new Individual Savings Account on 5 April

Phil, however, would be wise to-

The plan has a current value in the more fruitful in his quest for capital the right home for these savings. Phil region of £7,500 and Jane has already growth, particularly if he is willing to accept a balanced approach to risk.

The Woolwich account

The future of their young daughter is clearly a priority and Phil has already established a savings account with Woolwich for her benefit. Each month, Phil pays £20 into the account plus whatever is in his daughter's money box, usually hringing the total to around £30. According to Phil, the return is miserly but his higgest gripe with Woolwich is that, being a minor. his daughter did not qualify for windfall shares when the society converted last year to a bank. Understandably, therefore, Phil has very little loyalty to the Woolwich and wants to know what he should do with these funds (about £1,500 to date) to give his daughter the best start in life.

Given the benefit of the long-term investment horizon, which is possible because his daughter is still so young, the sensible approach would be to invest the capital in an environment

should consider using one or more unit trust funds and he would be wise to seek the advice of an independent adviser. Many unit trust savings plans will also accept on-going monthly contributions and this is an excellent way to save because you get the benefit of the "smoothing out effect" on unit prices.

Another consideration for Phil is his pension. As a member of his employer's scheme, he contributes £100 each month but admits that he has not changed the level of contributions in the last nine years. At 44, he should address the question of maximising pension with his adviser at the earliest opportunity.
Fortunately, Phil and Jane have a

small mortgage of just £26,000 against their home, which is valued at £125,000. Last year the mortgage proved to be a benefit when Phil received 200 windfall shares as a result of Halifax's flotation. Wisely, he has clung on to the shares, which have so consider a variety of options before he which offers the potential for subopts for a second Tessa, since other stantial long-term capital appreciation. far proved to be an excellent investment. Who knows what they might be types of investment might prove to be . . . A deposit account is definitely not _worth when his daughter comes of age!

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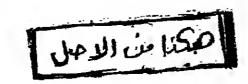
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ad, which should not exceed 0.7% for Fidelity MoneyBuilder Growth Mr. Reference to cause refers to the Fidelay MoneyBuilder products. Re



not just a style but a movement, with

ideals that are cherished today more than ever. It stands for the synthesis

of art and craft, for the humanisation

of mass-production. And its florid

abundance offers a dream of plenty

to a population tired of arid mini-

malism and the dour philosophy of

"small is beautiful". A minus point

is that its decoration is sometimes

"applied" in the worst sense - that

Art Nouveau's runaway lines - the

swirling hair of half-clad maidens

Fragile but more

vase, below left, by Emile Gailé

from the turn of

the century

portable than furniture: table lamp, left, and





ROBIN AMLOT INTERNET **INVESTOR**

Of cookie monsters and search engines

First Direct, Britain's first and cookle? That depends on how biggest "direct" banking business much you value your privacy. plans to offer PC Banking free is not an internet-based service secure private network. It has been on free trial to 5,000 customers since June last year. First access if you refuse the cookies. Direct says it may offer the service over the internet in the fu- Another piece of web jargon you ture, depending on customer demand. I had planned to review the service in some detail - there is apparently a demonstration of its service on the bank's website.

looked at the website is because it will not let me. Well, that'a not quite true. It will not let me without sending a "cookie". Normally, I avoid techno-jargon but this is one piece of it of which anybody using the web needs to be aware.

The best analogy for a cookie is Caller ID on telephones. Caller ID lets the person you are calling know your telephone number. Cookies work in much the same way. A website knows who has logged on by looking at your cookie. Anything you tell a website that uses cookies, it will remember the next time you visit. Anything you do at a website that uses cookies it can also repattern - allowing the business ucts to you and target you with special mailshots.

goes, smooth the path of con- tories (which tend not to be sumerism, making sure you only get business offers that interest you. They have also sparked a se-

let you access its website without mation Net Directory (FIND). sending a cookie. Which raises two questions. First, is it polite First Direct: for a website to do this? No, it www.firstdirect.co.uk. is not. (Imagine being escorted FinanceWise: out of your local supermarket by www.financewise.co.uk to tell them your address:) Sec- www.moneyworld.co.uk ond, is it safe to accept the FIND: www.find.co.uk

The bottom line is I didn't feel of charge to its customers. This like accepting First Direct's cookie. So I did not get to view but an intranet, on the bank's own the website. Many commercial websites now have cookies. However, most tend not to refuse you

may come across is "search engine". Search engines are the internet's telephone directories, basically automated programmes which seek out and note the ad-The reason why I baven't dresses of other websites which match specified criteria.

This month a new engine FinanceWise, made its debut on the web. Set up by Risk Publications and IBM's Securities and Capital Markets Division, it is a free web search engine for banking and finance professionals. But it is also going to be a handy tool for individual investors.

By indexing only sites and pages relevant to the world of banking and finance, Finance-Wise bypasses the millions of megabytes of irrelevant data returned with mainstream search engines. In fact, it is the only engine to offer three types of search option. You may search by keymember, tracking a behaviour word; by specific classes of products, suppliers, information or behind the site to tailor its prod- companies; or by sector listings.

Finance Wise is the first search engine to focus specifically on fi-Cookies, so the argument nancial websites. However, direcautomated) of financial websites have been available for some time, including the UK Personal rious debate about privacy issues. Finance Directory on Money-Anyway, FirstDirect will not world and the Financial Infor-

a bouncer because you refused UK Personal Finance Directory: a gap of there is now larger than the transfer at 1.

Nouveau riches for year 2000

Collect to invest: Art Nouveau is the ideal look for the new millennium, argues John Windsor

Nonveau look. The year 2000 coin- French, Italians - have cautiously encides with the centenary of the Paris Exposition Universelle that established Art Nouveau as a major force in art and design. Already, curators bid at Sotheby's New York last of European mus-

emms are vying to display important pieces of Art Nouveau glass, furniture, metalwork and poster art owned by private collectors. In London, the V&A's contribution will be a big exhibition, Decadence and Dreams: Art Nouveau 1890-1914.

Canny investors are already keying in "2000: Art Nouveau" in their electronie pocket diaries and casting around for what to buy. Glass by Gallé,

Tiffany, and Daum - fragile, but more portable than forniture - looks a good bet. With its swirling organic decoration it is the quintessence of the Art Nonveau ide-

al of applied art - literally, applying art to everyday objects, an ideal that the year 2000 will endorse. After the spectacular crash of Art Nouvean glass in 1991, when the Japanese, having bid stratospheric

prices, made a dramatic withdrawal from the market to attend to their own financial crash back home, the names of Tiffany, Gallé and Daum have given investors the fitters.

The millennium will have an Art investors-Americans, Greeks, Swiss, tered the bidding, pushing prices up to mid-Eighties, pre-crash levels.

The \$470,000 (about £287,000), Disamber for an

> magic year 1900, is an "immensely gratifying result", according to Philippe Garner of Sotheby's London. It may not be a but not hand-cut. The finest Gallé has patch on the crazy world-record for 4,995,000 French francs (about etched and band-carved, using a £500,000) - paid wheel like a dentists' drill. for a less exquisite nomenal craftsmanship should - in 1900 specimen at Sotheby's Monte an ideal world - deter crass specu-Carlo in October lators from bidding blindly for any-1990, just before thing by a known Art Nouveau the crash. But it name. The price that will be paid for shows that collec- this month's wisteria lamp will, hopefully, indicate a discriminating martors are bidding ket capable of restraint. A silly, high confidently withprice, would raise fears of another out taking leave

enchanting Gallé

wisteria table

lamp, made in the

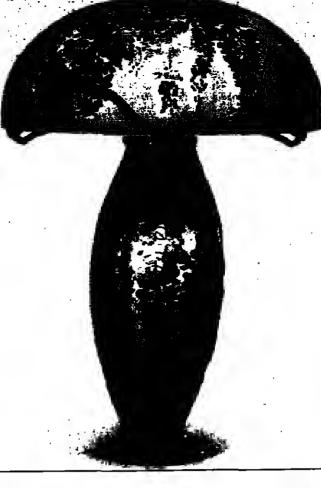
Vendors, no longer fearful half a dozen Daum vases estimated in the £2,000-£6,000 range. It is also their Art Nouveau worth looking at glass designed by glass will be left on the block, are conlesser names, such as the Austrian signing more of it to auction. At Mr Loetz (estimated from £1,200), whose prices are rising on the coat-tails of the better-known Daum and Gallé.

of their senses.

boom-and-bust cycle.

Garner's auction on Friday 20 March there are 41 pieces - mainly vases and table lamps - by the Frenchman Gallé, 39 by his one-time co-worker Danm, and five by the American Tiffany. Mr Garner has raised the minimum lot value to an up-market £1,500.

The forthcoming sale includes a 24inch high Gallé wisteria table lamp, more than three inches taller than the a mainstream subject - not in fashion, But since then, prices have bot- one that fetched \$470,000 in De- but not in danger of going out of fashtomed out, and new collector- comber. It is estimated at what seems ion, either - and I don't see why it



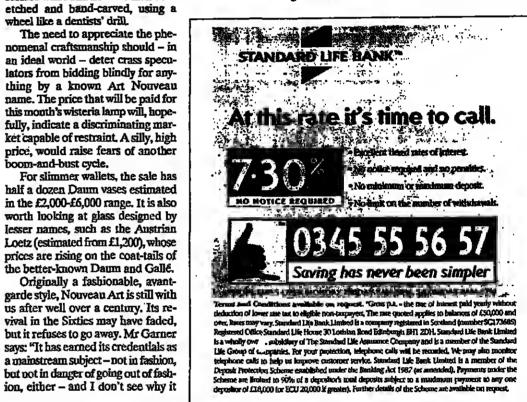
to be a knock-down £35,000-£45,000. shouldn't continue to maintain its position in the long term". But it is not as fine. It is acid-etched

Fun for investors will be to assess just bow closely the spirit of Art Nouseveral kaleidoscopic, multi-coloured layers of glass, some worked into the millennium. Its strength is that it is 293 5000). surface while still hot and then both

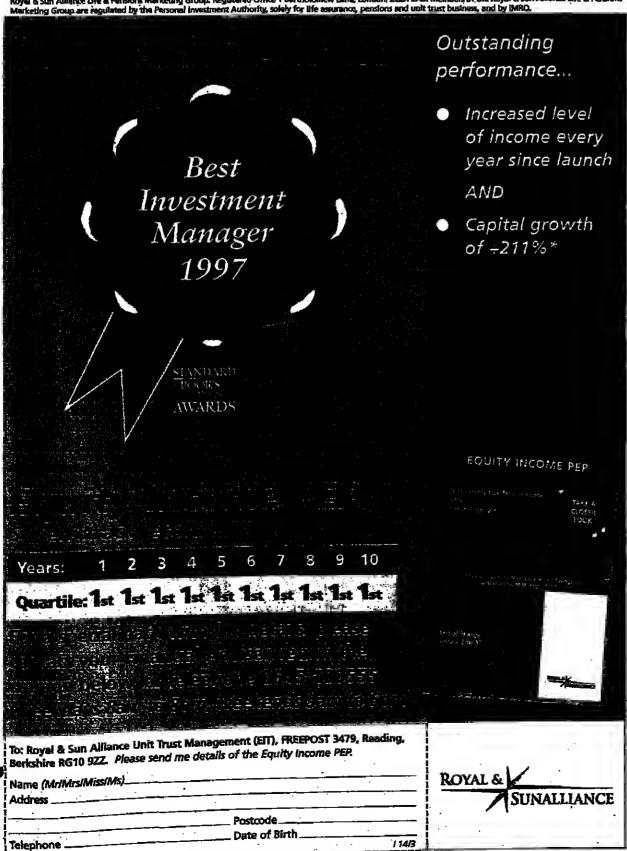
draped with lilies - make it heady, exotic, mysterious. When all the design history has been chewed over, it is perhaps this quality that gives it its deepest appeal. You might say that Nouveau Art is dead weird. But, these

is, as an excrescence.

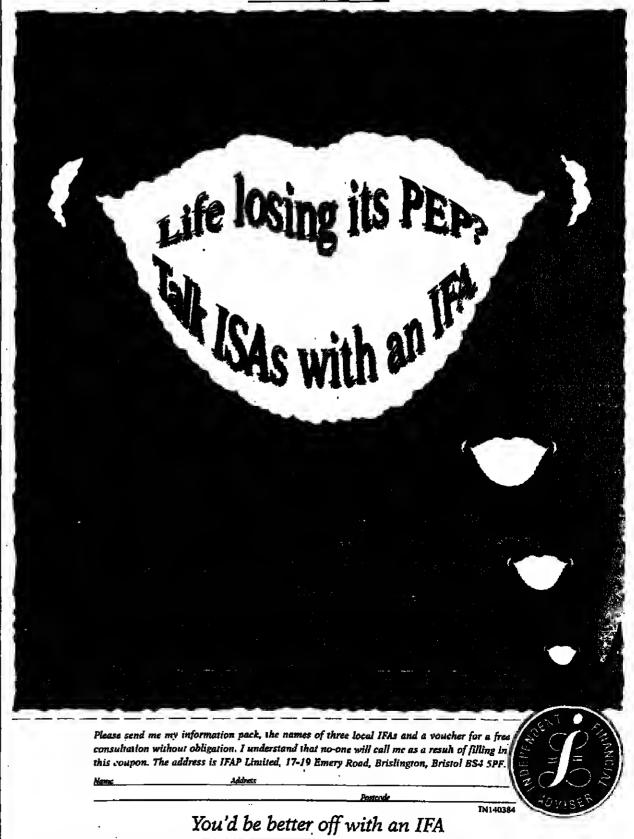
days, aren't we all? Applied Arts from 1880: Friday, 20 March, (10.30am), Sotheby's, 34-35 veau chimes in with the spirit of the New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-



"Source: Micropal, offer to bid, Income taken, for period 17/11/86 to 1/3/98 (equivalent 5 year figure +85.75%, 1/3/93 to 1/3/98). "Source: Micropal, all figures offer to "Source: Micropal, offer to bid, income taken, for period T/T1/86 to 1/3/98 (equivalent 5 year rigure 485.75%, 1/3/98 to 1/3/98), "Source: Micropal, all figures offer to bid, gross income reinvested, for periods ending 1/3/98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The prior of units and the income from them is not guaranteed and can fail as well as rise. The Equity Income Trust has been available as a PEP since May 1993. Full written terms and conditions are available on request. For your security, all calls are recorded. When the tax status of PEPs changes after 6/4/99, subject to any Government limits, you will be able to transfer to a Royal & Sun Alliance ISA free of any administration charge. Royal & Sun Alliance Unit Trust Management Limited, registered in England, no 2170242, is a member of the Royal & Sun Alliance Life & Pensions Marketing Group. Registered Office 1 Bartholomew Lane, London, ECZN ZAB, Members of the Royal & Sun Alliance Life & Pensions Marketing Group are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority, solely for life assurance, pensions and unit trust business, and by IMRO.

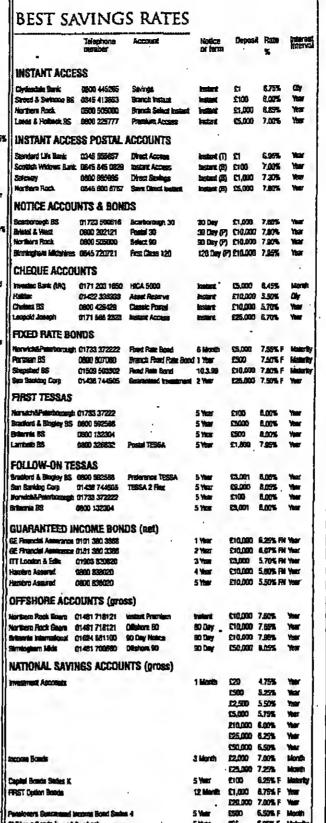






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BRIAN TORA

Laggards and leaders

How reassuring it was to see sent, I would be tempted to the FTSE 250 and the Small-Cap Indices move into new high ground this week. The bad news is that it highlights how difficult it is to find value amongst the top 100 companies. Still, at least it shows that UK managers are not completely bound into buying only those shares that the global money shunters are prepared to consider.

Of course, it remains the increasing popularity of tracker funds that have been driving the big market capitalisation stocks. Witness the way in which Misys shed a few pennies while Compass price on the news that the contract caterer rather than the IT specialist achieved the coveted place in the index of Britain's 100 most successful companies.

tells you a int about UK PLC when a leading retailer loses its coveted slot and the ingly, Misys would have been the only IT company to have

carned a place in the index. How different things are in the US. Aside from the fact that Microsoft is now the world's second or third-largest company in terms of market capitalisation, you only have to see the way in which any business linked with helping the internet operate finds its shares instantly in demand. I f you look at the top 25 internet companies in America, you find they are worth in aggregate nearly \$40hn. Very appropriate, you may say, but most of them do not make a profit. That amounts to a great deal of faith out there concerning the world wide w .. I hope it is justified. If I were seeking to tuck

in the FTSE Index. Sometimes known as the Tootsie. these are now big companies, many of them worth comfortably over £1bn. They have been left out of the equity rush, partly because they tend not to excite those American managers trying to gain a toe-hold in Europe.

trawl the second 250 stocks

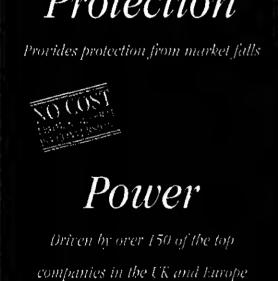
It is the growth of support for FTSE 100 funds that causes me most concern. What happens if the market takes a dive? Just as indexation has become a driving force for the market, so it could accelerate any bear received a boost in its share market and intensify its severity. At least a reverse would give active managers a chance to come back into their own.

At present nur own researchers rather favour two It was Dixons that re- acronyms from within the ceived the wooden spoon. It second tier of Britain's companies. BTP and Emap are very different businesses. Capitalised at £600m and main contenders are pure £2½bn respectively, one service businesses. Interest-100, while the other represents a more typical mediumsize British company. Emap (nr East Midlands Allied Press as it used to be known) has become less - much tess - nf a reginnal press concern that a European magazine and regional broadcasting group. BTP used to be known as British Tar Products and produces specialist chemicals for industrial giants. Both look capable nf sustaining above average growth, while enjoying what is these days relatively modest ratings. Sadly, neither are technology stocks, but that may save you money in the short term.

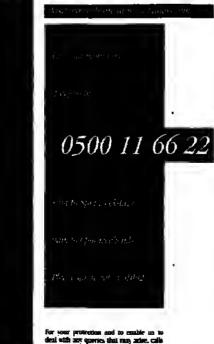
Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment money away wisely at pre-Strategy Committee.

the SNU lindex to the first 12 Performance hast 12 months commencing 17 April 2003. Princenton Investment 53,000 This is sucirties and in the unlikely Up to double your money deprudent on the investmen bring held for sty years. The value of your investment before then true fall on well as Protection based on our understanding of current terminates to the I spired himpions and invitand and are subject to statuent change. The value of tex relatives depend on your insisting depends on your insisting elegantaments. Only one undependent moriest tooler is anticipated. Transfers in to the Ground & Protection FEP do you take into account an wallshamed changes feeled by Provides protection from market falls

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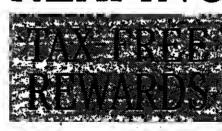
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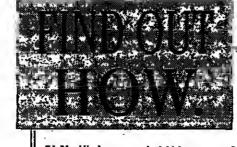
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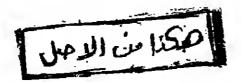


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The irresistible rise of the second liners

able advantage to be had from

shares. In other words, returns

from smaller companies were

higher than you would expect



ards and leaders

JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

Just as it was in the last great bull market which reached its peak in 1968-1972, the current stock market surge has been characterised by the extraordinary strength of large company shares and the relatively poor performance of smaller com-

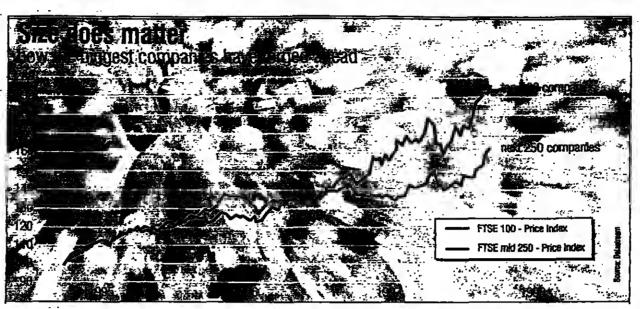
Any professional investors who have failed to invest in largest companies over the last two to three years has inevitably found themselves lagging behind in performance. As the chart shows, the Footsie index of 100 largest shares has comprehen-

sively outperformed the 250 index, which tracks medium-sized companies, and the All-Share.

The same phenomenon has taken its toll in the unit and investment trust business. The performance figures for funds which specialise in UK smaller companies tell their own story. The average unit trust in the smaller company sector has produced a return of 10.1 per cent since the start of 1997. The All-Share index, by contrast, has returned almost three times as much (27.0 per cent) over the same period. Even the very best performing fund in the smaller company sector has only returned 22.3 per cent, 5 per cent less than the market overall.

It is the same story, if not worse, in the investment trust world. Over three years the performance of smaller company specialist trusts has badly lagged that of the generalist trusts. At the same time, the discounts to asset value have widened, further depressing in-

In fact, apart from Far East and emerging market funds, the searchers discovered what they smaller company sector trades on a wider average discount than any other investment trust sector -14.9 per cent, according to the efficient markets, there apbroking firm Nat West Markets. peared to be clear and sustain-



company underperformance dates back several years. Since 1988, there has only been one year (1993) when smaller companies have comprehensively outperformed the market as a whole: Ironically, it was only in the 1980s that academic re-

even after making allowance for their higher risk. phenomenon been discovered came to call the "small company than it started to vanish, Paul effect". This was the discovery Marsh and Elroy Dimson, two that, contrary to the principle of Professors at London Business School who have closely monitored the small company effect

investing in smaller company that for all intents and appearances the small company effect had now disappeared. All sorts of explanations -

As so often in the stock some more convincing than pricing power. market, no sooner had this new. others - have been advanced to explain why smaller companies should fare better in some periods and not so well in others. The most obvious one relates to the prevailing economic cli-rapid shifts in demand. Smaller mate. When the climate is sta- companies, by contrast - at

chided in their latest annual sur- low inflation and steady susvey published a few weeks ago tained growth, as it is now, it tends to favour larger companies. They have greater freedom to secure economies of scale and develop and exploit their

> By contrast, when inflation is high, and the economy turbulent, the inflexibility of large companies is a disadvantage. They find it harder to adapt to

ter able to obtain a competitive edge. There are greater returns to entrepreneurship.

Whatever the reason, the interesting question now is whether the tide is once again about to turn in favour of smaller companies. There are certainly some pointers to that effect. The latest survey of fund manager intentions by Merrill Lynch suggests, for example, that institutional fund managers have recently started to increase their exposure to small and medium-sized companies.

On value grounds, many of these companies now look attractively priced, at least when compared with the demanding ratings of the biggest companies. Whichever way you look at it, shares in the FTSE 100 are not cheap. On a p/e ratio of 21, and a yield of 2.3 per cent, the Footsie index is discounting an awful of good news.

For tactical reasons, therefore, the arguments for looking elsewhere make sense. A number of US fund management houses are said to have been picking up shares in the FTSE 250 index in the last few weeks on value arguments of this kind. It would not be at all surprising if the dramatic recent outper-

least those that survive - are bet- formance of the Footsie index over other sections of the market was to falter this year.

But will it be more than a temporary rebalancing of the past disparity in performance? Scanning the visible economic horizons, it is hard to see any fundamental reason why the prevailing economic climate should turn against larger companies and back in favour of their smaller brethren. As the split in the Bank of England's monetary policy committee demonstrates, there are real concerns about the possibility of a short-term blip in inflation. But there are as yet no signs it will

be anything other than a blip. However, the value arguments for smaller companies may be more compelling. For anyone who follows a contrarian investment philosophy, the fact that the smaller company effect should now be being written off is a classic indicator that it may now be about to return.

Of course, if the current fashion for large company shares also proves to be the apotheosis of the whole bull market, then a return to relative favour may be of scant consolation. But a burst of short-term outperformance by smaller company specialists is now overdue.

The cost of cut-price mortgages

Discounts, fixed rates, capped Check the small rates, the permutations of cutprice mortgages seem endless. print before you Lenders want you to borrow. But where the incentives are sign up for a cheap very attractive, is there a catch?

Lenders can no longer re- loan. By lain Morse quire you to take life insurance and savings policies with the insurer of their choice. Existing Insurance Service came up with policies should be fully transferable when you move from one lender to another.

But this does not apply to buildings, contents or accident, a premium of £403.44. sickness and unemployment Act. As a result, buying one or SVR, equalling 6.3 per cent for the first one runs out."

more of these types of cover three years, and Newcastle 5.99 Take Scarborough BS, curfrom a lender can be made a per cent fixed for three years. rently offering a one-year fixed condition of qualifying for a discount loan.

Because these products are not sold on the "best advice" obliged to find you the cheapest cover available.

Of course, discounted and fixed-rate loans are still available if you insist on finding your own insurance, but you must expect to incur interest rate increases of between 0.25 per cent and 0.5 per cent on the cost of money borrowed.

Take buildings insurance as an example. This covers the rebuilding cost of the property to exceeds the market value by a factor of up to 50 per cent. Standental damage clause, against

surance can vary massively. Asked to quote on identical terms - a flat in Edinburgh with a rebuild cost of £200,000, AA

an annual premium of £59.72. Meanwhile; National Direct quoted an annual premium of £215.28, and Newcastle Direct

Both of these premiums (ASU) insurance. None of these were quoted as part of fixed-rate Other lenders like Woolwich, and Abbey National quoted at least £350pa while the mutual basis governing the sale of life a premium of £474.60 a year, products, lenders are not again as part of a discounted

> Accident, sickness and unemployment policies are becoming more popular with lenders. Several offer them along with house or contents cover on the basis that borrowers must choose two out of three of these policies to qualify for a discount mortgage.

According to Ray Boulger, of mortgage broker John Charcol, "In almost all cases, be purchased, which usually anyone under 40 can find cheaper ASU cover either direct from an insurer like ITT Londard cover includes an acci- don & Edinburgh, or from a mortgage broker."

At least one reason why factors like fire and flood. Premiums for building inlenders make these types of insurance compulsory are the ums paid over the policy term. Redemption penalties also

apply: to these loans, but the basis for charging can differ widely. Some apply a fixed percentage of the amount borrowed. As a general rule, the greater the incentive, the greater the penalties of redeeming a loan before the set period.

According to Mr Boulger, anyone tempted by a special deal should look closely at the small print. "Avoid redemption penalties that last longer than the discounted or capped rate is covered under the best advice packages. Nationwide offered a on offer. That way, you are free clauses of the Financial Services 1.8 per cent discount off their to look for another deal when

> rate loan at just 1.25 per cent. A redemption penalty fixed at 7.19 per cent of the amount bor-Skipton BS came top, quoting rowed applies for the first five years of the loan. After the first 12 months, this loan reverts to Scarborough's SVR of 8.69 per cent, currently 0.2 of one per cent above the average charged by major lenders.

Most such redemption penalties are set at 5 per cent of the amount borrowed, but for those contemplating partial early repayment, care is needed, as the penalty is set not on the outstanding balance at the time of redemption but the full amount for borrowed.

Early redemption penalties are avoidable, but only if you remortgage with the same lender, borrowing the same or more. Most will charge the penalty, then pay it back as a credit, reducing the amount of the new loan. But purchase of your new levels of commission their re- home will have to be completed ceive, which can amount to as within three months of redeemmuch as 40 per cent of premining your first loan to qualify.

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The lure of offshore gains

As ISAs with their £50,000 cap loom, investors are sending their savings into exile. By lain Morse

surance policies are booming as the Budget looms. With the prospect of personal equity plans (PEPs) and tax-exempt pecial savings accounts (Tessas) being scrapped in 1999, the lure of these investments is

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Sales of offshore bonds and in- are putting cash into investmeots designed for expatriates.

Peter Nightingale, of accouotants Deloitte Touche, strong. But savers tempted by here. They are sold as a substithe prospect of tax-free gains tute for good tax planning".

the investment trust in 1868

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Foreign Q Colonial

Dunbar and Scottish Widows, have set up offshore arms based warns "many of these offshore in the Channel Islands, Dublin vehicles pay high commission to and Luxembourg. These havens intermediaries, and offer little levy tax oo fund income of 20 real saving to anyone living per ceot or less, with oo charge on capital gains.

But UK taxpayers are still liable to tax on encashment of such policies, after deducting the original amount invested. The key difference is that because these funds roll up free of tax, they allow its deferral and should give better performance than UK based equivalents.

Clerical Medical International estimate the net gain for shore bond could be as much as 10 per cent of the amount first invested, but only after holding the bond for 15 years or more. The gain for a higher-rate taxpayer is even greater, but early encashment hrings heavy

FSA recognised offshore funds, account paying 7 per cent gross.

A oumber of British insurmostly run through Luxemance companies, like Allied bourg. These are similar to

> Nigel Davies of Arthur Anderson suggests "These can be useful for those with capital but no income. Fuods pay only a 15 per cent withholding tax. Using both your personal allowance on income tax and annual exemption on capital gains means that you can realise up to £10.545 tax free."

Many UK banks and building societies also run offshore accounts, paying interest gross. Abbey National (Jersey) return 6.2 per ceot gross for deposits of £10,000 or more on instant access. Onshore, their a basic-rate taxpayer in an off- 30-day account yields just 4.98 per cent gross for the same

Income tax is payable on interest received but for non taxpayers, rates can equal those from Tessas. If you have no other source of income, your personal allowance of £4.045 means Better value can be found in you can hold over £50,000 in an



New Year resolutions for the tax avoider

As a new Budget and the end of the tax year approach, Tony Lyons does some financial stock taking

It is at this time of year that we should all ensure we have made the best use the tax system for investing our hardearned savings.

With the financial year ending oo 5 April, we should make full use of whatever tax benefits there are when L comes to putting our money away, whether saving for a rainy day, a comfortable retirement, or whatever. This year it's more important than

ever. On Tuesday, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will announce his oew Budget. And it promises to be a wide-sweeping, tax reforming Budget.

We already know that personal equity plans (PEPs) and tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) have

be replaced with Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs).

But, as is usual at this time of year, rumours are swilling around about many other changes that may be ancounced. These include measures to duding culling the tax benefits of offshore investment.

Inheritance tax may also be changed. Another rumour is that pension investment made by individuals may only attract basic-rate income-tax relief. This latter piece of tittle tante, however, to issue a greco paper later this year which will unveil its thoughts oo future courage us to do more to save for our retirement, and its ideas on the creation of the stakeholder pension.

mean you should suddenly switch your savings because of rumours, rather it is prudent housekeeping.

For example, PEPs have been an through the sifting process, this survey changes.

just one more year and what's left of outstanding success with somewhere in looks at some of the currently available this tax year to run. After this, they will the region of £50bo invested in them means of tax-free investment. since they were first introduced in 1987. It makes sense to use your full al- ment, here are 10 rules to remember: lowance in what is left of this tax year Never invest more than you can af-

and for 1998/99. Even if you think share prices are Don't invest just because of the tax too high in the stock market and could schemes available from a number of dif- like, what you are investing in. fereot managers that will guarantee at

But a word of caution. Never invest ings. You should only put your money you'll have. into an investment because it suits your look at meets your investment aims. Aflosing mooey.

Whether you are looking to put away So oow is a good time to get your a lump sum or a regular amount each the long term - five years or more - or time the short term, there are various Don't rush into an investment just be-

Wheo looking to tax-free invest-

limit tax avoidance even further, in- be heading for a fall, there are various Make sure you understand, and Always compare charges.

least your original capital investment. Look at past performance of various competitors - it will not forecast the in anything just because it offers tax sav- future, but it may be the only guide

■ Some schemes are complex, so get sits badly with the Government's plans purposes. Don't take risks you cannot financial advice if you feel you need it. afford. Make sure that whatever you If seeking advice, qualified independent financial advisers are best. pensions provision, how it will en- ter all, the higher the risk, the more Some schemes, such as personal penchance there is that you could end up sions, can be very inflexible, make sure you understand any penalties such as what happens if you stop payments. ■ Make sure that you are happy to lock financial house in order. This does not month, whether you want to invest for up your savings for what could be a long

schemes oo offer. In order to guide you cause you fear the Budget could make

The Corporate Bond PEP

regulation "Source LGDA (e) (4-98). The gross (lefd of the Fixed forerest Took Gold as at 9 March to sites estably a guide to femos performance, Forh capital and income with a up and you may not get back the anjourn cost apple to PEPs meest wheth in that Traces Tax as implions are th urrently applicable and an subject to Authors chance the nation to our ander shall emanustrates full written details are a adable on request legal a General (Pres) Landed, Registers in England No. 2702080. keesterni Office Temple Street London ECaN 4775 Representative only of the legal & General markering group, member of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Arthron, and IMRO for the bothers of occumen advesting on and selling

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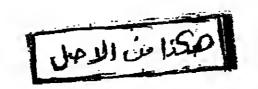
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The first shot in a tax offensive

Tax planners believe a Government crackdown on offshore trusts means we are in for a tough Budget. Paul Slade reports

The Chancellnr, Gordon Brown, acted last week to bring forward one of his planned Budget measures closing an obscure but lucrative tax loophole.

The loopbole allowed rich offshore trust holders to save capital gains tax (CGT) by bringing trusts set op before 1991 back onshore (see box for details). Although only a few hundred people use this procedure, the sums involved are huge.

The Treasury believes that by bringing this planned Budget measure forward 11 days to apply from 6 March, it has saved up to £1bn in revenue which otherwise would bave been lost.

Most of the people benefiting from the loopbule were company directors involved in management buyouts or directors of privatised companies. both of whom could see enormous gains nn the shares they beld.

Whenever a Budget change like this is anticipated, the products to be barred are frantically promoted on a "buy-now-while-stocks-last" basis.

Philip Harrison, tax partner at Eversheds, a national law firm, says: "Although this has been known about

for years, it's only recently that it's become prevalent. Some of the specialist firms of tax consultants have been mail-shotting people. I think what's happened is that it had become too well-known, and the Government decided to crack down

Tim Jones, of accountants Arthur Andersen, says: "It was a very complex manoeuvre, involving very fancy professional fees. We're talking about really big gains bere. One person could have £200m worth of gains. Capital gains tax on that, at 40 per cent, is £80m."

Mr Jones and Mr Harrison agree that this move suggests the Government will adopt a tough stance on other tax-planning measures. Mr Jones warns: "This flags the Government's intention to attack those trusts with shares in them which are pregnant with gains, and haven't yet been liquidated."

Mr Harrison says: "The Government is serious about putting a stop to this sort of thing. We all know that there have been plenty of people who have gone in for tax

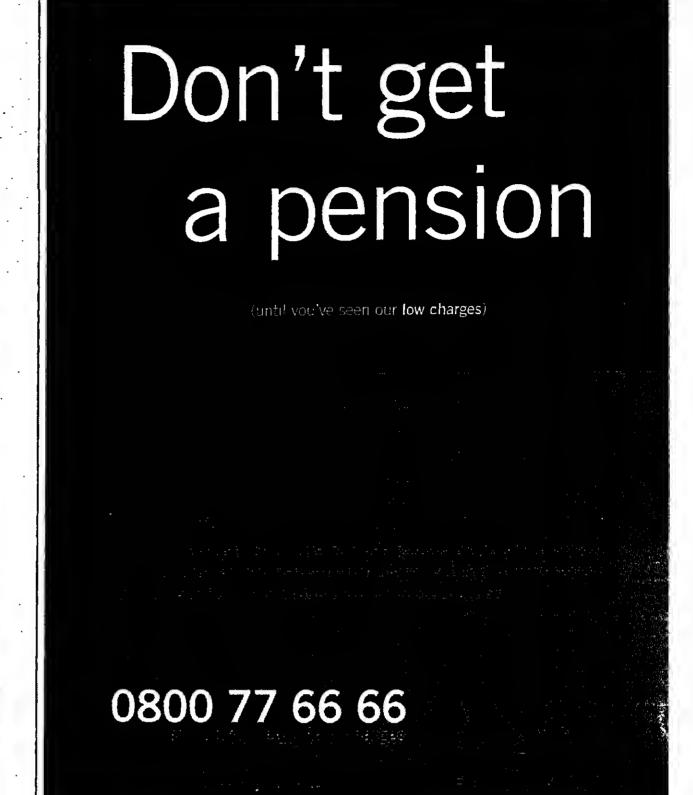
"There have been lots of loopholes - entirely legal ones - and there's no way you can argue with the Government for closing some of those down."

A Treasury spokesman says: "The Chancellor has always made it clear that the Government is committed to looking at tax avoidance and closing loopholes in each Budget. This Budget is an opportunity to see what further loopholes or tax-avoidance measures need to be tackled."

The Chancellor is expected to use his Budget on 17 March to annunce consultation on introducing a general anti-avoidance measure. One form this could take would be allowing the Inland Revenue to disregard any transaction if it believed the main purpose of that transaction was to

Many experts fear a provision like this would deter companies from making perfectly innocent transactions, for fear the Revenue would accuse them of trying to dodge tax.

Mr Harrison says a general measure would be workable only if the Revenue were prepared to clear planned transactions in advance.



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Venture into trusts

standing in their personal equity plans (PEPs) are being inundated by their advisers with dehome for their money.

smaller companies have un- should be wary of plunging in.

Many investors with large sums Generous tax breaks mean VCTs are being hyped as PEP

substitutes. But, writes Tony Lyons, they're not without risks

tails of new venture capital wrapped a number of VCTs to And the tax benefits are so gentrusts (VCTs) as an alternative tempt you to part with your erous that Gordon Brown may money. While they all extol the tax benefits of their investagement groups specialising in ment vehicle, ordinary investors

even be tempted to rein them in when he delivers his Budget speech on Tuesday.

The rules about VCTs are

troduced in the 1995 Budget to stimulate investment in small companies, either new start-ups or ones too tiny be listed on the Stock Exchange. Currently, if you invest in VCTs, you will receive all the income from and growth in the value of the shares tax free. Up to £100,000 a year per person can be invested in VCIs. In ad-

dition, you will qualify for 20 per cent tax relief on the money you put in providing you hold the VCT shares for at least five years. You will, however, only benefit from this tax relief if you invest in new shares. And the tax benefits don't stop there. Wealthy investors also benefit from what is called roll-over relief. This means that if you bave made a healthy profit from investments elsewhere, if you invest this money in a VCT you can defer the gains until the time when you sell the trust's

So it's not surprising that new VCTs are currently on of-

Should investors kick Tessas (tax-

of bed now the Government has an-

nounced that they will be abolished

to make way for the Individual Sav-

ings Accounts (ISAs) in April 1999?

until midnight on 4 April 1999. Since

1991, thanks to the then chancellor

John Major, Tessa holders have been

allowed up to salt away up to £9,000

out of the taxman's reach: £3,000 in

var one. £1.800 in years two, three

although they may not use the same

age long-term savings, the tax break

on the interest applies only to money

left in for the full five-year term,

something that ISAs will aim to rec-

As they were designed to encour-

route for reinvesting the income.

Savers with a Tessa maturing after

and four, and £600 in year five.

five years may reinvest the full £9,000 capital into a follow-on Tessa,

Tessa will keep ber charm right up

The short answer is no.

fer from the likes of Murray Johnstone, which already runs two other funds; Guinness Flight: Elderstreet: Oxford Technology and some six or so quite complex. They were inother groups. In particular, they are trying to woo investors with significant sums already saved in PEPs who are worried about the proposed lifetime cap of £50,000 on Individual Saving Accounts (ISAs) when they are introduced next year and PEPs go out of existence.

But don't rush into buying a VCT just because of its tax benefits. These are high-risk investments. The managers can only buy into companies worth less than £10m. They may well be new enterprises in innovative hi-tech or hiotechnology areas. By their very agture, small and start-up companies are more likely to go belly up than their larger competitors. It can take a manager time to

ments for his fund. He or she may well want to have 20 or 30 companies in the portfolio to give a reasonable spread and protection against any possible is crucial. If you pick a dud in-failure. Under the rules, they vestment, selling the VCT failure. Under the rules, they must invest 70 per cent of their shares can be problem. If it's with private investors. This is

find a range of suitable invest-

Maison Blanc has grown by 400 per cent since venture capitalists invested £560,000

in three years, which can include you will have to repay any incompanies on the Alternative Investment Market, or investors lose their tax breaks. In fact, none of the existing funds are yet fully invested.

If you are keen to invest in this area, you must be prepared to lock in your money for at least the five years to get the tax reliefs. Picking the right fund

come-tax relief. And since only new VCT shares qualify for full income-tax relief and the right to defer capital gains tax, it will be difficult to find a buyer. This is why the shares in existing VCIs trade at well below net as-

Management groups with expertise in funding start-up companies may not be generally well-known household names

assets in qualifying shares with- within five years of purchase, why you will probably need expert independent financial advice to find them. If you need a financial adviser, IFA Promotions (0117 971 1177) can put you in touch with some in your area. Among the management groups with VCIs who have plenty of experience in venture capital and have large enough funds are Advent (0171-630 9811), Baronsmead (0171-600 6655), Murray Johnstone (0800 289978) and Guinness Flight (0171-522 2111).

"- The bened

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Nource Scretch Widows, Returns on 1 November 1997 on a regular swing amount of £50 a month from November 1987 to October 1997 medium; Relates to a man aged 24 for the 10 year cash option value of a similar plan to the Premier Savings Plan. For performance is not personally a guide to the future. With profits maturity and surrender values cannot be guaranteed in advance. The information given here is based on Soutish Widows' understanding of current tax law and inland Revenue practice - these may change in future.

Make use of your last chance to pick up a Tessa

Tessas will remain attractive to investors up until exempt special savings accounts) out 4 April 1999. Richard Shackleton explains why tify with their open-ended invest-

ment terms. Unlike an ordinary hank or build-

ing society savings account, Tessas usually pay a higher rate of interest. fixed over the life of the account. But with rates seemingly on the rise again this relative advantage has either narrowed or even disappeared altogether. Savers hoping to grab Tessas' higher rate for a few years might not be put off by this although they could be hit by the early withdrawal penal-

ties imposed by many providers. To compensate for the changing interest rate climate, some providers bave brought out "escalator" Tessas. which give progressively higher rates. For instance, Woolwich pays 5.75 per cent in the first year, followed by 6.50 per cent, 7 per cent, 8 per cent. years, with no loss of tax breaks.

and 9 per cent in years two to five. Another innovation has been the equity-linked Tessa, which allows investors a limited exposure to the stock market, using derivative instruments tied to a UK market index, typically the FTSE 100, HSBC/Midland, Bristol & West, Birmingham Midshires and Abbey National all offer this sort of product. But equitylinked Tessas either have steep penalties if the money is needed before the five years are up or do not. permit withdrawals at all. They also,

of course, expose investors to risk. So how should savers view the transition period between Tessas and ISAs? Under the current proposals, any Tessa started before 5 April 1999 will be allowed to run its full five-

Once the Tessa matures, savers will be able to transfer whatever they accrued in the account - although not the interest earned - into an ISA so long as the transfer does not take them over the proposed overall cap on ISA investments.

Savers will, therefore, fall into two camps: those who can transfer their Tessa cash into an ISA, and those who are caught out by the lifetime cap. However, and this is the key point, neither group will really he much worse off. Savers who can transfer their Tessa money without exceeding the ISA limit in are in exactly the same position now as they were before ISAs were announced.

Savers who think the lifetime cap will stop them transferring their Tessa cash into an ISA will still benefit from five years' tax-free interest. The only thing they will lose is the right to roll over their capital into a new. tax-free-account.

Source: Micropal, offer to bid, gross income reinvested, from 26/2/96 to 2/3/98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of your investment may fall as well as rise and is not quaranteed. You may not get back the full amount invested. Please be aware of the Government's proposed tax changes. TPEPs will no longer exist after April 1999, At this point the Government intends to introduce a new tax-efficient individual Savings Account (ISA). At present, a limit of £50,000 is proposed for contributions including transfers of existing investments to an ISA. However, the consultation process is not yet complete and the exact details of the ISA may change. "The offer is a 1% discount on the initial charges when Alliance & Leicester plc. Registered Office: 49 Park Lane, London WTY 4EQ. Registered in England. Company No: 3263713. Authorised as a bank pursuant to the Banking Act 1987. Member of the British Bankers Association. The Alliance & Leicester Marketing Group, consisting of Alliance & Leicester plc and Alliance & Leicester Life Assurance Company Limited, which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority, and Alliance & Leicester Unit Trust Managers Limited, which is regulated by IMRO, only sells its own life assurance, pension, unit trust and PEP products For security and training purposes all telephone calls between you and Alliance & Leicester or it's subsidiaries may be recorded/monitored

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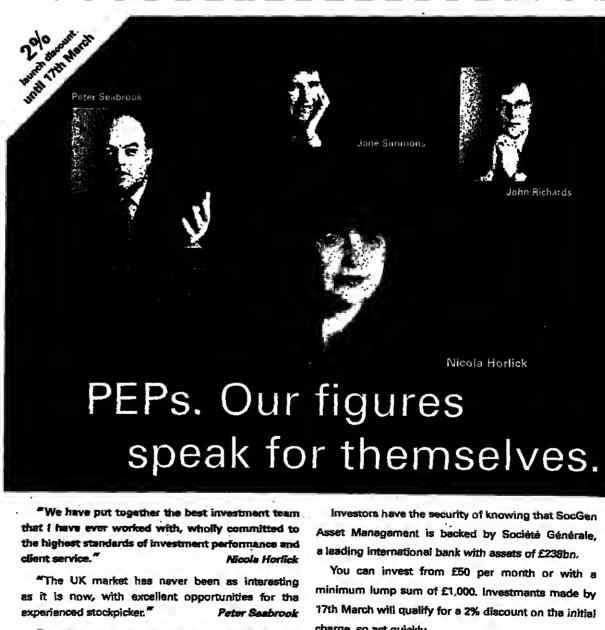
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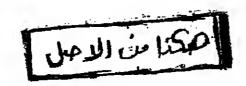
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ASSET MANAGEMENT The shape of things to come



9/TAX TIPS

The benefits of being in a friendly society

Personal equity plan (PEP) managers and Tessa providers are looking anxiously towards the Budget as Gordon Brown is expected to release the full details of the new Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), which will replace the existing tax-efficient investments plans. For frieodly societies, however, the new accounts will represent an opportunity.

ards and leaders

The Chancellor has already announced that friendly societies will be able to offer ISAs, in addition to their existing tax-free. 10-year savings plans. It in effect means that they will be able to compete oo more or less level terms with the big institutions wheo it comes to attracting savers. However, the chances of friendly societies spending massive amounts oo advertising any oew ISAs are slim. In reality. they are likely to continue offering their members a range of

products with few frills or costs. At the heart of the friendly society deal is the 10-year savings plan. These accounts are able to offer tax-free savings because they cootain an element

"Friendly societies provide a nicely packaged savings product which grows tax-free," says Barry Chambers, marketing director at Family Assurance, one of the leading societies, "A lot of people earmark the cash for a particular event, such as wedding anniversary celebrations, or just some cash for chil-

dreo or university costs," The Government is keep to encourage people to have adequate life assurance and that is why the plans are granted taxfree status. However, the life as-

How to fix

credit rates

The rules on how

lenders advertise

their loans are set

to change. John

Andrew reports

At long last the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

is taking a serious look at the

regulations which prescribe

the way in which mortgages

are promoted. Last month

the DTI published a consul-

tatioo paper, "Clarificatioo

and Simplification of UK

If the proposals are in-

troduced, it will end years of

confusioo for the consumer. The concept of the annual

percentage rate of charge,

more commonly known as the APR, was introduced in

1974. It was designed as a

yardstick representing the

true cost of credit including,

for example, any arrange-

meot fee and the cost of

taking legal charges to secure

introduced requiring the

APR to be shown in all credit

advertisements featuring an

interest rate. The message

their APR according to the

with another". In a outshell,

"the lower the APR, the bet-

ter the credit deal".

In 1980 regulations were

the borrowing.

Consumer Credit Law".

The tax-breaks that the friendly movement can offer their savers crease in the amount of cash will be extended when ISAs arrive. Simon Read reports

are generally sold as savings of a £970 deduction from their

The maximum monthly amount you can put into a friendly society 10-year savings plan is £25, or savers can invest up to £270 a year. To get the full tax-free status, the plans must be maintained for 10 years tax liability or the return of less than you've paid in.

Worse, if the plan is closed before 12 monthly payments have been made, there will be no return of cash at all. This is because of the life assurance element. Payments in the early years predominantly go towards paying the charges of that. However, some of the cash will also be invested on your behalf to ensure a payout after 10 years.

The investment is managed by professional fund managers who use their expertise to get maximum returns. In effect, the plans work in exactly the same way as endowment policies where some of the premiums pay for the life cover, and the rest is invested on your behalf.

Returns oo the friendly society plans will be hit by the cost of life cover and expenses and charges, although friendly societies - stung by criticism about the size of charges - have been working hard to reduce costs as much as possible.

However, an illustration from Homeowners friendly society shows that someone investing the maximum amount each month - 3,000 over 10 surance element of the plan is years - would pay £598 in depretty small and the accounts ductions, producing a real effect

dard variable rate for the rest

of the mortgage term. This

had the blessing of Lacots,

the organisation of the na-

tion's Trading Standards Of-

one or two lenders argued

that a fixed mortgage could

be followed by another. They

therefore based the APR for

their fixed-rate mortgages

oo the fixed rate for the en-

Nat West was one of the

tire term of the mortgage.

All went well at first, Then

ficers (TSOs).

bring investment growth of 9 per cent down to just 4.7 per cent a year. Hardly headline returns. On the other hand, not using a friendly society savings plan means losing out on the tax benefits. IFA Promotion, a marketcashing in early could mean a ing body promoting independent

fund. These deductions would

financial advice, calculates that people already saving with an endowment policy are wasting £50m a year in tax by not saving in a friendly society. Too many people overlook

friendly societies when planning their savings and investments," says David White, bead of sales and marketing at Tunbridge

Wells Equitable, "As far as using their tax-free premium allowances is concerned, my advice is use it or lose it."

There are, in fact, hundreds of friendly societies around the country, but only a few offer products to the general public. Most restrict themselves to providing a range of benefits for their members.

This shows itself in the membership figures of friendly societies - 6 million people are part of the movement but only 1.5 million have a tex-free savings plan. The largest national friend-

Making Your Investments Work ly society is Liverpool Victoria. for You', sponsored by Wesleyan Looking ahead, the soci- Assurance, can be obtained by eties would like to see an insending in the coupon on page 4

fering the accounts to our loyal

customers," says Mr Chambers.

The Independent's 'Guide to

people can save in their 10-year savings plan. "We would like to see the Chancellor increase the limit," says Mr Chambers. "The accounts are very attractive to many people who like the discipline of having to save regularly. An increased limit would improve the attraction." In the meantime, the larger income societies are gearing themselves up for the launch of ISAs next year. Many already have ISAper annum ready accounts, but haven't been making a big noise about them. We'll be concentrating on of-

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The Index-Tracking PEP

regulation. Source: Micropal/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from OL11.95 (Legal & General since launch) to 03.03.98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 06.04.99 mx credits will no longer be able to be reclaimed by PEPs . investing in equity based unic trusts. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get . back the amount brested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs

rusts. Full written details as at 03.03.98. The Government published a consultative document in December 1997 on propossis for individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) to be brunched to April 1999. The terms and timits for converting an existing PEP into an ISA are being considered as part of the consultation. Legal & General (Direct) Limited. Registered in England No. 2702080. beered Office: Temple Court, Il Queen Victoria Street, London ECAN 4TP. Representative only of

investing wholly in unit

lenders who took this new apthe Legal & General proach. A TSO in Devon took exception and successmembers of which are fully brought a prosecution, regulated by the Personal but this was overturned in Investment Authority and (MIRO for the purposes of June 1993 by the High Court. recommending, advising The oatioo's TSOs. were on and selling life shell-shocked, especially as their counsel warned that products bearing this method could result in Legal & General's name.

low rate of interest for a short period and calculating its APR on that basis for the entire loan. Despite its concerns, Lacots issued a statement to its members suggesting that it would be acceptable for lenders to calculate the APR

for credit offers where there

was an initial period of dis-

count, oo the basis that the

some lenders securing an

advantage by offering a very

discount applied to the entire was clear and precise: because lenders "must calculate period of the loan. Enter the period of deeply discounted mortgages - only same special rules, you can 1.49 per cent (APR 1.5per compare one type of credit cent) for first 12 mooths. As the rate would revert to the borrower's variable standard rate after a year, logically the In 1989 these regulations yardstick should have been

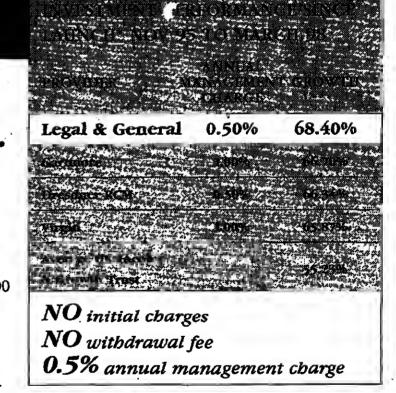
were "simplified and modernoearer APR 9 per cent. ised". Sadly, there was no at-The DTI is now propostempt to cover new products ing that there should be con--mainly fixed mortgages - and sistency, with lenders basing there was a complete disregard their APR oo the discounted for the new ways in which rate for the period of the credit was being promoted. lower rate and on their stan-Looking back, it is incredulous dard variable rate for the Westminster, the DTI and the OFT did not recognise that remainder of the time.

promoting credit on TV is The DTI is to be congratulated on its proposals. However, its consultation should be extended to also cover the way credit cards are promoted. Currently, it takes a genius to decide which piece of plastic is the better buy. Ler's have a level playing the fixed rate for the period field for all forms of credit that the rate was fixed, folnot just part of it! lowed by the looder's stan-

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different from advertising in the written word. With no guidelines as to how to promote fixed-rate mortgages the industry devised its own method. It was decided to base the APR on

Looking for a new haven

The end of PEPs has prompted a rush for lesser known tax-free investments. Juliet Oxborrow looks at some options

find out whether they will be forced to transfer their PEPs into ISAs. Or, as has been mooted, will ing schemes and allow investors into their pension by carrying to start afresh with their ISA forward unused tax relief from allowance? Whatever Gordon the previous six years.

Brown announces, it is unlikely investors can sit back and relax. One lucrative haven for investors likely to exceed the proposed ISA limit is a pension. Provided you have the net rel- so, this would still give a £1,000 evant earnings, money moved into a pension will receive tax

man. Investors with a large poteotial ISA excess can max-

Tuesday could he the abolition to defer UK tax, not to avoid it of higher-rate tax relief on pension contributions, leaving only basic and lower-rate relief. Even pension investment an immediate uplift of up to £298.

PEP investors will be keenly payer who puts £1,000 into a ample and moving investments waiting for Tuesday's Budget to pension receives a further con- offshore should get expert tribution of £666.67 from the tax advice before doing so. Offshore the Chancellor ring-fence exist- imise the amount they can put iders, but while offshore havens of Man and Bermuda and Lux-Bad news in the Budget on tax regime, they can only be used

> For example, offshore savings accounts can pay interest gross but interest must be declared on the relevant year's tax return and paid in due course.

investments are offered by many like the Channel Islands, the Isle embourg are outside the UK's

> arrives, you can be earning interest on the taxable element. Offshore savings accounts with decent rates of interest include Britannia International 90-

90 days notice for withdrawal. and, needing 30 days less notice, Northern Rock (Guernsey) Offshore 60, which pays 7.65 per cent gross on £10,000.

Offshore roll-up funds, the nearest offshore equivalent to come tax. This means tax can be

PEPs and unit trusts, can defer tax for a longer period of time. Returns accumulate inside the fund so no tax is payable until the fund is cashed in. At this point, they are charged to in-

deferred for many years, perhaps until the investor retires and moves into a lower tax bracket, or moves abroad and outside of the UK tax regime. Income seekers looking off-

shore can opt for distribution funds. However, as with offshore deposit accounts, tax is payable on these every year when income is distributed. An alternative income gen-

erator is an offshore insurance bond. Returns accumulate in the bond, but up to 5 per cent a year can be withdrawn as income. Tax is not payable on withdrawals until the bond is encashed.

However, UK insurance bonds can also offer 5 per cent income and, according to Paul Boni of independent financial advisers Berry, Birch & Noble: They can be more attractive than their offshore equivalents. With onshore insurance bonds, tax is only paid on the difference between higher-rate and basicbeen taxed internally throughout Finance magazine'.

the investment term. Offshore bonds can suffer the full higherrate of tax on encashment."

Haven on earth: Bermuda, where

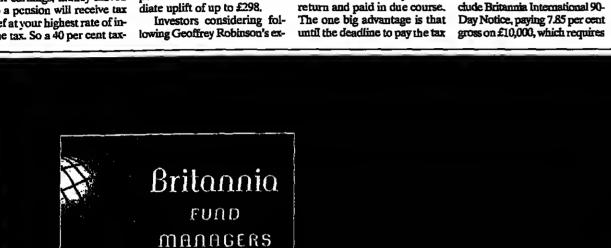
investments disappear from the

Although the panic is now on to keep investments as taxshould consider whether they are actually prone to tax. Worrying about tax is a misplaced concern for many, as few breach the capital gains allowance limit, currently £6,500 for the 1997/1998 financial year, at which this tax is payable.

By realising gains gradually over a period of years, most investors can ensure their incan make the most of their tax allowances by allocating assets between them. Married couples have an advantage in that they can swap assets without it counting as a disposal for tax purposes. Income tax is harder to avoid. Consequently, many investors will want to think about keeping their PEPs and ISAs first and foremost for income-bearing investments.

Finally. Mr Boni warns that with markets at their current high peaks investors should be looking to consolidate the growth they have made so far, in case the market takes a dive. "Td consider transferring to a protected investment such as the Legal & General's Growth & Protection PEP," he says. "It tracks four world stock markets and guarantees to return your original capital at the end of six years."

rate tax, because the bond has The author is editor of Personal



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Get your PEPs while stocks last

It's not too late to start saving in a PEP. Sarah Barnett explains how they work

If you are a regular reader value of your funds, you of the financial pages, you will be oo stranger to the personal equity plan (PEP). Although its demise is immineot, it still represents one of the best ways to invest in the stock market.

PEPs enable you to invest in shares or collective investment vehicles, such as unit and investment trusts. free of income and capital gains tax. Each year you can put up to £6,000 in what is known as a general PEP. In addition, you can put up to £3,000 in a single company PEP, which can hold ordinary shares in one UK or EU company. You are only allowed one of each of these PEPs per tax

There is no minimum investment stipulation but, in practice, most providers will not permit investments of less than £1,000 for lump sums or £50 for monthly contributions.

PEPs do not have a fixed time span and you are free to cash in your investments whenever you choose. But to ensure you recover from any stock market setbacks. you should regard a PEP as a relatively long-term commitment. A general PEP allows

you to invest up to £6,000 in

■ Ordinary and preference shares of companies listed in

the following investments:

the UK or on a recognised EU stock exchange. ■ Fixed-interest securities of UK companies (better known as corporate bonds). ■ Unit trusts, investment trusts and open-ended investmeot companies (Oeics), which are at least 50 per cent invested in either or both of the above assets: these are known as "qualifying funds". ■ "Noo-qualifying" uoit trusts, investment trusts and Oeics (those that don't meet the 50 per cent rule); however, these can only account for a quarter, up to a maximum of £1,500, of your gen-

eral PEP investment. If you are a first time investor, or cannot stomach The author is editor of What dramatic fluctuations in the Investment'.

should look to invest in pooled vehicles such as unit trusts and investment trusts rather going directly into equities. These give you diversification and reduce

your exposure to risk. You should also be cautious if you are about to dip a toe into shares for the first time as the market has recently been experiencing record peaks. Although this growth in share prices shows no signs yet of abating, you are buying shares at a time when the market is expensive.

If you do not want to be exposed to the full thrills and spills of the stock market, you may wish to consider guaranteed or corporate bond PEPs. Guaranteed PEPs provide a degree of protection against stock markets falling while corporate bond PEPs provide a fixed return.

For those brave enough to invest in equities, Doug Brodie, director of independent financial adviser PEPmaster, recommends making regular contributions. As he points out: "The danger of lump sums is that you could be buying into the market when it is at its most expensive whereas, with regular monthly savings, you can guarantee that one of your premiums will be within 15 days of the lowest price during the year."

However, not everyone will benefit from having a PEP. Charges can wipe out the tax breaks for lower rate income-tax payers. There is also some doubt as to whether you are likely to make much mooey by investing at the moment.

"The litmus test to decidiog whether to invest in equities is do you think that the market is very high? The PEP only works oo the basis of profit. If you think there is no profit to be made theo it's a waste of time," says Mr Brodie.

A man, a dream, a plot

Mix hi-tech Internet and Io-tech elbow grease and you can save thousands, writes Mary Wilson

Put together the Internet and a plot of a phonecall from Tony and Ishbel land and you have two happy self-build couples. Peter and Linda Vincent had been kunting for their perfect plot for almost three years, when they discovered a beautiful site for sale near Strete, in Dartmouth. They had decided to build a house designed by Potton Limited, which specialises in timber-frame kits. But this site had planning for two four-bedroom hungalows, not one.

permission after

"It was also far too large and too expensive," says Peter, "but we were determined to buy it." Peter and Linda had been living in the Midlands hut wanted to move to south Devon. They had looked at lots of houses, all of which needed work. Then they went to a self-building show in Birmingham.

"We were caught by the bug," says Peter. "I was working as an IT manager, so was used to the Internet and started writing bits and pieces on the Individual Homes Plotfinder forum. We saw the site near Strete and put a note on the forum saying the plot has sea views, good access, is close to services, is there anyone out there who might be interested in joining forces buying the plot?" Not long after, they received

Stuart, who wanted to meet up and have a look at the site. They discovered they only lived a few miles apart and both.

had decided to build a Potton home. Although they both originally wanted to build houses, they had to think about putting up bungalows instead. So Ishbel e-mailed Potton for brochure details from one of its subsidiaries, the Bungalow Company.

Throughout the project, the couples liaised with each other via the Internet. They researched the project and also dealt with Potton on-line.

"I found the Internet particularly useful when looking for materials as I had decided to do all the wiring and plumbing myself," said Peter Vincent. The only problems we encountered were building delays as there was more waste to remove from the site than originally anticipated."

The couple were working full-time while the house was going up, so they ended up doing 16 hours a day. Linda did all the decoration and has also done most of the landscaping.

But the two couples have not only found themselves the perfect site, via



The house that Pete built: Peter and Linda Vincent and their self-build home in Strete

a few thousand pounds by building their own homes. The two houses cost about £100,000 each to build including £31,000 each for the plot and are expected to be worth £150,000 each when completely finished. The Stuarts and the Vincents just three weeks ago.

Self-building is one way to live in the home of your dreams if you are prepared to give time to adequate re-

the Internet, they have also saved quite We now have a house we would never have been able to afford in a milhon years," says Ishbel Stuart.

Peter has learnt one very important lesson. "Although I had no problem borrowing the money, I didn't think enough about cash flow," he moved into their home last November says. Lenders expect you to put up 20 to 25 per cent of the cost of the land. They then lend money in tranches as the building work progresses.

However, these sums of money are search before you start. "It is a lent in arrears. "So, you mustn" chance to use your initiative and you spend your capital up front, which is can always find a way round problems. what I did," says Peter. The timber-

frame kit will be the most expensive lump sum and the supplier will want to be paid on the nail. Either you need to have the money for this, arrange credit with the company or organise an overdraft with your bank.

The Individual Homes Home Building and Renovating Show, 19 to 22 March, at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre. For half-price tickets bought be-fore the show, ring 0181 710 2186.

Potton and the Bungalow Co, 01767 263300 or e-mail sales@potton.co.uk.

How good neighbours can become good friends

It is easy to believe that the only neighbours worth mentioning are those from hell. But the truth is that many more of us stay put because the people next door make life so pleasant than are driven out by long-running disputes. The agents Knight Frank estimate that while 5 per cent of people cite their neighbours as the reason for moving, at least twice as many won't consider selling because they regard them as irreplaceable.

Neighbours are as likely to be entrusted with the intimate complications of family life as they are with the keys, and since it comes with the territory,

It's not just bad

neighbours who influence sales, says Penny Jackson

is pretty daunting. But for those who do have to move, it's not always a matter of closing the book on the neighbourhood. More than a few are as auxious about who buys their house as they are about where they go next.

Extraordinary expressions of youd the call of duty. Gold Walker,

can do." They duly put in an offer of couldn't have shown my face again." £30,000 less which she accepted.

She even stock with them through a collapsed sale of their house and a process which could have been completed within a month took six. "Eight lots of people wanted the house, neighbourfiness sometimes go well be- some of them with cash. I turned them down because I didn't like them," says it is not surprising that the thought of who lived in her London house for Miss Walker. "The house had been in starting all over again in a new area more than 40 years, felt an obligation the family since 1933. It would have object to hunting and one offer was offers had been made.'

to her neighbours that had her sell- been terrible to see it divided up . The turned down because the neighbours ing agents in despair and her chosen spirit of the house would have been buyers pinching themselves. The cou-destroyed . A lot of that was to do with intend to live locally they know they'll ple were surprised to be shown out our friends next door and I wanted with the words: "You know what the that to continue. I was going to keep agents want for the house, don't in touch with them and if I had landyou? Ridiculous isn't it, See what you ed them with complete horrors I

> While it is not unusual for people to run prospective buyers through a checklist, it is rare that they will make a financial sacrifice. "A great many of their good intentions are forgotten in the end," says Martin Lamh of Knight and his neighbours were very upset Frank's Exeter office. "But we have about it as they were asthmatic. It just sold a house for someone who was very keen that the buyers should not weeks later, though, when no other

didn't like the person. If the vendors never hear the end of it if the new owners turn out to be appalling."

Some sellers seem almost to regard themselves as their neighbours' guardian. One agent recalls getting a call from an agitated client the day after some keen buyers had been round to see the house and meet the neighbours. "He told us he couldn't possibly sell to them because they smoked didn't seem to matter so much two



PENNY **JACKSON**

A case of false economics

Just about everyone has had the education hotspots is a chance to air their thoughts gearing up for an intense few on how Caterham Barracks should be developed. As an historic site in the centre of town, people feel they have a particular stake in its development.

So the community planning weekend run by the developers Linden gathered almost 1,000 people - from local schools to local MPs. Workshops were organised into stages - problems, pletion by the end of June dreams and solutions - and there's a marked inwhich threw up ideas such as crease in the discussion the rebuilding of a cricket about schools here and pavilion and a network of cycleways. But according to one person who didn't attend the weekend, crucial lessons are in danger of being overlooked.

Huw Thomas, architect of the very successful Peninsular Barracks scheme in Winchester, says that fewer houses, good landscaping and an emphasis on it being an historical site are what drive the values up, not packing the homes in.

"In Winchester a third of the land is garden and woodland. From what I have seen of the Caterham plans, it looks like a typical case of developer-itus is eating away as much land as they can get away with."

Caterham has heen warned.

As parents are gradually coming to terms with the might like to know that she February offers of places for employed Gertrude Jekyll to the next school year, one of set out the gardens.

months. South Bucks has more than its fair share of good independent and state schools and if parents don't start the ball rolling now, by September they could be many miles from the school gates. Damian Gray. of Knight Frank's Beaconsfield office, says that everyone wants to be settled before the summer. "That means com-

'Developer-itus is eating away as much land as they can get away with'

around the dinner table." In Chesham, a grade II listed house is on the market for £750,000 and in Wooburn Common, a six-bedroom house with "private and substantial grounds" is £900,000.

Around the same price is being asked for a Surrey house that once belonged to Sir Oswald Mosley, Upper Ifold house in Dunsford was his home before his black-

Anyone warmed by the portrayal of his first wife in the recent television series

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Museums for mantelpieces

Rosalind Russell reveals a legal way to take gallery and museum exhibits home with you

described by marketing types as a desti-nation shop. That is, you don't have to pay entry into the gallery or museum to buy a memento. They are already hugely popular in America. In New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art not only has an in-gallery shop, it has another busy Design Store on 44 W53rd St selling products for

the home, including furniture and lighting. It's the equivalent of buying the T-shirt without having to go to the gig: useful, on a tight weekend break schedule.

The new National Gallery shop will sell goods inspired by works in the gallery, including a specially designed range of "image lights". They are ultra modern and feature detail from paintings in the gallery. They'll cost £25.

It's hardly surprising museums and galleries are turning themselves into department stores when you consider the amount of money to be made. Last year more than £97m worth of V&A brand tableware, furnishings and fashion pieces were sold worldwide. That includes everything from the V&A brand name talcum powder, sold in Marks and Spencer, to duver covers by Dorma, carpets by Ryalux and wallpaper by Osborne and Little. Not all the branded goods are sold in the muse-um, but the licence fees have boosted the Old-fashioned telephones, in red, green or black, cost £49.95. A radio, with the carthe branded goods are sold in the muse-V&A's fortunes and made it a formidable business partner. In the annual report last year, the museum reported a growth in profits of 45 per cent. Sales at the shop were 47 per cent up, proving, says the museum, its "maturity" as a gift buying venue. And with more than 5 million objects in the collection to inspire designers, the opportunities appear limitless.

young contemporary British designers. Plates, cups, saucers and teapots are sold as individual pieces, making the purchase feel more like patronising young design than cover a wide range, from £15 for a ceramic mng to £1,000 for a large red decorative plate by Rupert Spira, a collectable designer.

On 1 April, a new shop opens within the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. It is called William Morris Kensington Fruits is expected to appeal to customers comfortable with a classic design logo. The theme is apricots, peaches and cherries painted on a crackle glaze mustard-yellow background. The collection covers everything from a thimble at £8.95 to a set of dessert plates

> The V&A's Iznik ceramics collection in the Islamic and Ceramic Galleries was the inspiration for an Iznik Revivals collection of five plates, made by craftsmen in Kutahaya and Bursa, Turkey. The designs use the traditional shades of turquoise, aquamarine, green and red. At £120 a plate, they're more likely to be decorative than functional. A range of green Weldon ware is made by the grandson of the original maker, whose work is displayed in the mu-seum. Prices go up to £76.95 for an oval

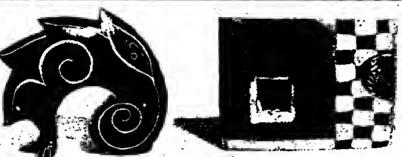
> You might think the Imperial War Mu-seum would find it well nigh impossible to muscle in on this destination shopping business, but it has risen to the challenge. The Cabinet War Room in Westminster - part of the IWM - has just had its shop re-fitted in time for the Easter holiday rush. The mahogany fittings echo the War Rooms, as do the goods for sale.

> cass designed to look like the 1930s and 1940s radios and showing the old wave bands, but with modern interior, costs £29.95. For your very own war-torn office desk you can buy an electric fan (£99) like those in every civil servants' office in India, or a banker's lamp with green shade

Other retailers have been quick to copy. The Craft Council takes up some of the The mail order firm The Art Room offers V&A shop space, selling one-off pieces by a shower curtain printed with Alma-Tadema's A Favourite Custom, painted in 1909 and hanging in the Tate. With de-tachable waterproof liner, it costs £39.95.

just buying a boxed set from Ikea. Prices Contacts: Cabinet War Rooms, Clive Steps, King Charles Street, London SWLA 2AQ (0171-930 6961); The Art Room 01993





From the V&A's Crafts Council Shop: above, Christie Brown's Male Head and Shoulders'; far left, Fiona Salazars Uncurling, and left, Helen Talbot's Cooking it up for even little men'

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Cottages near Morpeth Northumberland, sitt right oppo-

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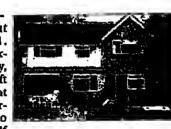
Morpeth Golf Club. Bought by the present owners 11 years ago, when it was semi-derelict, it has been renovated and restored as a three-bedroom, two-reception house. Apart from a 21-ft reception hall, there is a 20-ft lounge with doors to the rear garden, and a large dining-room. The secluded garden includes mature trees, borders, and vegetable and fruit plots. GA Town & Country is asking £180,000 (01670 516711).

in Bramley. Surrey, on a privat road that runs along the northern boundary of an



18-hole golf course. The 12-year-old bungalow has a 25-ft reception hall, drawing- and dining-rooms, a study and three bedrooms. The drawing-room has doors to the garden and terrace, and an electrically operated sun-blind. The large kitchen/ breakfast room is fitted with gas hob, double oven and built-in breakfast bar. The gardens over more than a third of an acre, include a greenhouse, a summer house, a garage and lawns, with open views across the golf course. £450,000 through Browns (01483 531166).

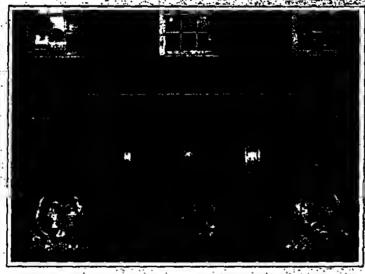
wood, at Pyrford. near Woking, Surrey, has a 100-ft garden that backs dir-



course. The three-reception, five-bedroom house, which was built in 1964, has since been extended. On the ground floor there is a study, a large family room, and a 25-ft sitting-room with a raised fireplace and sliding patio doors leading to the garden. The main bedroom includes a dressing area with built-in wardrobes. The agent, Curchods, is asking £360,000 (01932



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